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President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

High-level Meeting on the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/797)

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank delegations in advance for maintaining silence during the debate. I also remind them that, pursuant to the relevant resolution, statements are limited to five minutes. I would therefore ask speakers to observe the time indicator that is on the speaker's rostrum.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency The Honourable Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Mr. Douglas (Saint Kitts and Nevis): I speak before the General Assembly on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in my capacity as the lead CARICOM head of Government with responsibility for human resource development, health and HIV/AIDS. I am also speaking on behalf of that wider Caribbean constituency, the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS (PANCAP), which I have the honour to chair.

Some 10 years ago when countries gathered here in New York for the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, it was amid great uncertainty about how and what had to be done to stem the tide of this pernicious disease, which seemed to strike the death knell for those infected and brought anguish to those affected. That conference resolved to take certain bold steps, including the establishment of what is now called the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In 10 years, collective action and an increasing level of shared responsibility have given hope that better must come to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Through the dedicated work of natural and behavioural scientists, philanthropists and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as leadership at the national and global levels, great strides have been made. Scientific research has produced medicines, in particular generic medications to aid care and treatment. The application of behaviour change through social marketing interventions has contributed in no small measure to arresting the spread of HIV, reducing the number of deaths from HIV and AIDS and increasing awareness of prevention policies. In so doing, there is a growing realization of the need for inclusiveness aimed at the eradication of HIV-related stigma and at enabling equitable access to HIV-related information and services, especially for the most at-risk populations.

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The membership of CARICOM and PANCAP has always played a very active role in this global process for an accelerated approach to the issue of HIV. It is no doubt in our self-interest to find solutions, since our region remains second only to sub-Saharan Africa in terms of prevalence rate. Nevertheless, the Caribbean holds out the prospect of being among the first group of countries in the world to achieve universal access.

It is worth reminding this body that it was the Caribbean Community that responded immediately to the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS. Just two weeks later, on 2 July 2001, at its Conference of Heads of Government, it was stated, through the Nassau Declaration, that the health of the region was the wealth of the region. The Conference identified the Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV and AIDS as one of the main pillars and aligned its actionable recommendations with the outcomes of the Declaration of Commitment. The other pillar, the Caribbean Cooperation in Health, is a broad framework that outlines major priorities in public health and includes HIV as one of its action areas.

In that context, the most recent initiative, the establishment of the Caribbean Public Health Agency, through the consolidation of five regional health institutions, is the ultimate manifestation of the Nassau Declaration. This consolidation may yet act as a catalyst for the realization of both universal access and the achievement of the health and HIV/AIDS indicators of the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 target date.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) scorecard on universal access in 2010 demonstrates that much progress has been made in the Caribbean region. Over the past 10 years, the prevalence rate has stabilized at 1 per cent overall, with significant variations among countries. New HIV infections have declined by 14 per cent. AIDS-related deaths have also declined by some 43 per cent. The Caribbean was the first region in the world to submit all of its national reports to the General Assembly by the stipulated date.

Efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination have intensified. Programmes in that connection target the formal education sector, youth, the workplace and faith-based organizations, among others. The engagement of our universities, other regional institutions, NGOs and the media has also provided an impetus for an accelerated approach to HIV and AIDS.

In this regard, therefore, as we meet today, there is much to celebrate within the Caribbean region. Yet for us in the Caribbean, warning signals remain. An estimated 17,000 persons were newly infected with HIV in 2009. Indications are that transmission rates among key populations, such as men who have sex with men, are increasing. In addition, unprotected sex between men and women — especially sex workers — is believed to be the main mode of HIV transmission, making the Caribbean the only region besides sub-Saharan Africa where women and girls outnumber men and boys among people living with HIV. In 2009, an estimated 53 per cent of people with HIV were female. High infection levels have been found among female sex workers — including 4 per cent in the Dominican Republic, 9 per cent in Jamaica and 27 per cent in Guyana. Consequently, most countries in the region have targeted those groups for HIV prevention.

We in the Caribbean have come to recognize that while progress has been made, the gains will be fragile unless innovative and bold steps are taken towards the goal of an HIV-free generation. Hence today we join in the chorus in the Assembly calling for a strong impetus at all levels towards achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. We support the recommendations of the Secretary-General contained in his report (A/65/797), which focus on prevention, on revitalizing the push for universal access and on striving for value for investment through enhancing access to essential medicines and maximizing efficiency in terms of non-drug-related costs. In this regard, particular attention must be paid to women and girls, with an emphasis on reversing harmful gender norms.

In the final analysis, ambitious national targets must be set and emphasis placed on achieving accountability standards. The outcome document of this High-level Meeting will set laudable targets for the future, but they will not be achieved unless the Assembly also endorses a global compact based on shared responsibility, creative and collective leadership, broad national ownership, the innovative use of technology and the engaging of communities, including through the increased use of social media to develop local and sustainable solutions.

We in the Caribbean believe that emphasis must also be placed on securing long-term, sustainable financing, without which a reversal of the marginal gains made over the past 10 years is inevitable. We in the Caribbean support the need for replenishments, so that the Global Fund can be maintained and increased. We also support the need to harmonize donor resources so as to reduce the administrative burden. We in the Caribbean will continue to advocate for a revision of the conditionalities that impose increased burdens on small economies designated as middle-income countries without taking proper account of their vulnerabilities. However, we will equally support the call for the proper management of financial resources and for policies that ensure that people living with HIV are placed at the centre of our concerns.

We commend the Global Plan of the UNAIDS Global Task Team, chaired by Michel Sidibé and Ambassador Goosby, aimed at the elimination of new HIV infections among children by 2015 and at keeping their mothers alive. The recommendations in this plan make the call for such elimination a standard refrain. Let us take our cue from this positive approach.

We in the Caribbean, at the tenth Annual General Meeting of the Pan Caribbean Partnership, held in Saint Maarten in November 2010, identified specific deliverables for our region by 2015. Those are the elimination of mother-to-child transmission; the elimination of travel restrictions for people living with HIV; an 80 per cent increase in access to treatment; a 50 per cent reduction in infections; and the acceleration of the agenda to address prevention, care and treatment. These are all aligned with the Millennium Development Goals, whose 2015 deadline must act as an incentive. This global partnership must work collectively to achieve the targets that we all support in the interest of humanity, those living with the disease and those yet to be born.

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind speakers that statements are limited to five minutes for statements made in national capacities, and eight minutes made on behalf of a group. I ask speakers once again to observe the time indicator that is on the speaker's rostrum.

The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Aires Bonifacio Baptista Ali, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr. Ali (Mozambique): At the outset, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating the United Nations for having organized this important event. This High-level Meeting constitutes a historic opportunity for us as nations and multilateral institutions to reaffirm our role in, and commitment to, addressing the threat posed by HIV and AIDS to our development agenda as we strive to achieve the targets agreed for 2015.

We are encouraged by the results contained in the report of the Secretary-General before us (A/65/797), which indicate that our efforts to address the scourge of the HIV pandemic at the global, regional and national levels have yielded encouraging outcomes. Nevertheless, the challenges before us are still overwhelming. We are confident that this meeting will lead to a commitment, based on the valuable knowledge that we have amassed over the past three decades, that will deliver on the greatly aspired-to goal of universal access.

The General Assembly Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) remains the guide for our national AIDS response in implementing the "three ones" principles. Mozambique is now implementing its third national strategic plan on HIV, for the period 2010 to 2014, within a decentralized framework focused on reducing new infections. The presidential initiative on HIV and AIDS launched in February 2006 accelerated, and continues to give impetus to, national efforts carried out in a coordinated way by all sectors — public, private, civil society and the media.

As a result of a consistent national strategy and strong support from our bilateral and multilateral partners, Mozambique has been able to reach historic levels of service delivery and outreach, namely, in increasing access to antiretroviral treatment, including for children under 15 years of age, and services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. The promotion of support and services to protect orphans and vulnerable children through families and community-based organizations also deserve special attention.

Our first-ever national HIV survey, which was carried out in 2009, points to the fact that women, and in particular young girls, are the most vulnerable to HIV infection. Hence, over recent years, reducing vulnerability and risks, including ways of dealing with

stigma, gender inequality and gender-based violence, has received increased attention in national efforts.

Mozambique is strongly committed to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission by 2015. In that regard, a robust national plan of action will be implemented. Mozambique will certainly achieve the virtual elimination of mother-to-child transmission as recommended by the African Union Summit in Kampala in July 2010.

The integration of HIV and AIDS and other health services has proved beneficial in terms of highly improved access to HIV related treatment and care as well as tuberculosis and other health services.

The importance of many sectors, including social affairs, education, youth and agriculture, is highly visible in both the prevention of HIV and the mitigation of the negative impact of AIDS. Greater youth involvement is part of our national strategy.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize that our national efforts must be driven by the evidence, which indicates that prevention will continue to be our leading priority in our fight against HIV and AIDS. The low levels of condom use and HIV testing remain urgent challenges, and the feasibility of the general promotion of male circumcision will need further assessment. The strengthening of the health system should also put emphasis on maternal and child health, both from the clinical point of view as well as from the perspective of community participation and support for social services.

We call for continued and increased national and international commitment and solidarity in facing the very real threat that AIDS poses to our nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Gharib Bilal, Vice-President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Mr. Bilal (United Republic of Tanzania): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, and the United Nations for having organized this High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS, which is once again bringing the issue of HIV and AIDS to the global stage. We thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Uniting for universal access: towards zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths" (A/65/797). The recommendations provided in that report warrant our serious consideration.

We commend the work undertaken by the secretariat and of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and its co-sponsoring agencies in the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262). We also welcome the Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health, which aims at reducing the number of maternal, newborn and under-five deaths.

Tanzanians live with the devastating impact of the virus on a day-to-day basis. The socio-economic impact of the HIV and AIDS epidemic in a poor country like Tanzania is enormous. Among the effects of the epidemic that are felt most is the growth in the number of orphans and vulnerable people, currently estimated at about 1 million.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar have continued to implement both the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. A strong political commitment on the part of the President himself, and the entire Government, has enabled the country to achieve progress in combating HIV/AIDS. To encourage voluntary counselling and testing, which are key factors in the prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS, in mid-2007 the President and the First Lady of the United Republic of Tanzania initiated a testing campaign and shared their own test results. At the time, close to 2 million people had been tested, but by December 2010 the number had grown to 13 million. That action, coupled with the increase in the use of condoms and antiretrovirals, a programme on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission and a high information, education and communication uptake, has enabled us to see the beginning of a decline in the HIV prevalence rates from 7 per cent to 5.7 per cent in mainland Tanzania, while in Zanzibar the prevalence rate is below 1 per cent.

Our Government has put in place modalities for expanding coverage and sustaining treatment services through its 2008 health policies: the Health Sector Strategic Plan III; the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health I plan; the 2008 National Multisectoral Framework; and the 2008 Health Sector HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan. We are also using the decentralized health system, as per our Primary Health Care Development Programme, to expand treatment to more

primary and community-based facilities. Through these actions, the number of people on antiretrovirals had reached 388,000 by December 2010. In 2010, antiretrovirals were being provided to 70 per cent of HIV-infected pregnant women and 57 per cent of HIV-exposed babies.

On the prevention front, the Tanzanian Government has put in place various HIV prevention methods, including male circumcision and the control and treatment of opportunistic diseases, as well as early detection and treatment of other high-risk diseases for HIV/AIDS transmission, including tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections.

Combating HIV and AIDS is everyone's responsibility. At this juncture, I would like to underscore the importance of involving the private sector and civil society in this endeavour. We wish to acknowledge the support of our development partners, both bilateral and multilateral, as well as of the private sector and social entrepreneurs. The Government, for its part, has provided an enabling environment that includes HIV/AIDS policy and legislation, and has mainstreamed HIV/AIDS into its national development strategy to ensure that more funds are available from the Government budget.

Tanzania faces a number of challenges that may threaten our achievement of some of our national and Millennium Development Goals and targets. These include dealing with the stigma of HIV/AIDS as well as the financing gap for HIV and AIDS intervention, which is above 90 per cent. To that end, Tanzania is establishing an AIDS trust fund and putting in place modalities to scale up the national health insurance fund and community health funds to work towards universal coverage. This will help to further build national capacity to meet the growing resources required for prevention, treatment and care, mitigation, and building an enabling environment that can help us meet all the needs of the Tanzanian community.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

It is also unfortunate that people die prematurely from AIDS because, inter alia, poor nutrition exacerbates the impact of HIV on the immune system and compromises its ability to respond to opportunistic infections. That is why we urge immediate action at the national and global levels on integrating agricultural, food and nutritional support into programmes directed at people affected by HIV. This is in order to ensure access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that can enable people to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life, as part of a comprehensive response to HIV and AIDS.

The Tanzanian Government will continue to do its part and to participate in many of the initiatives towards zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. We once again urge the international community to complement and supplement our national efforts and to continue to invest in HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Richard Kamwi, Minister of Health and Social Services of Namibia.

Mr. Kamwi (Namibia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). SADC aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Senegal on behalf of the African Group.

The SADC group wishes to assure the Assembly of its full support and cooperation for a successful conclusion of this crucial gathering. This is a pivotal time, when the whole world has come together to take stock of the progress made in the global response to the HIV and AIDS pandemic and to craft a way forward. We will be judged not on looking back, but rather on the quality and success of the plans we forge for the future global response to the epidemic over the coming decades.

When I speak for SADC I also speak for the estimated 11 million people living with HIV in our region — a reality that can be expressed in dry figures, as well as through the suffering of the people, communities and nations in our region that have been devastatingly affected by the world's largest-ever epidemic. I declare, on behalf of the leaders of SADC, that as leaders we will continue to lead and will forge the regional response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic, guided by the Maseru Declaration on HIV and AIDS, until we reach the elimination of new infections. The level of commitment I see here today gives me great confidence that we will do so. The world is not merely meeting just to launch yet another plan or declaration on how to tackle this persisting challenge, but is celebrating the unwavering commitment of

Governments, partners, donors, the international community, non-governmental organizations, community-based associations and communities to make a tremendous difference in the lives of our peoples.

Progress has been made in fighting the AIDS epidemic in our region. The percentage of adults living with HIV has fallen by up to 25 per cent in the most affected countries. Most of our countries now have prevention of mother-to-child transmission coverage rates of greater than 70 per cent, and three have managed to reach 90 per cent. However, we must stay vigilant. The progress that has been made remains very fragile and must not be allowed to slide back.

We are deeply concerned that the number of newly infected people still outstrips the number of people starting treatment. The 2 million-plus people on treatment must be weighed against the 3 million who require treatment now but do not have access. Moreover, it is imperative to act in response to the new, groundbreaking results from the research that shows that treatment can reduce HIV transmission between couples by 96 per cent. That means we have a much bigger reason to provide antiretrovirals to many more of those who need it.

We must also be aware that most of the resources used for the AIDS response come from outside our region. The sustainability of those funds is threatened by the global financial crisis and changing donor priorities, meaning that we as SADC countries are obligated to find tangible solutions to our priority issues.

The biggest challenge we face as a region is to keep the necessary resources flowing for the AIDS response. We have pledged once again to increase national health budgets towards the 15 per cent Abuja target of African Union member States, and we will explore various innovative strategies aimed at mobilizing domestic resources, such as Zimbabwe's AIDS levy, which is collected from all workers' salaries every month.

SADC countries are encouraged to create a core strategic financial plan for the health sector to guide Governments and partners. We recommit ourselves to making efficient and effective use of resources and to being accountable. However, without international solidarity and external support, our AIDS response will be significantly undermined.

For the benefit of all those who have been affected by the epidemic, putting an end to it is uppermost in our minds. We therefore request continued, increased, predictable and sustainable financial assistance, through international mechanisms such as the Global Fund, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and other sources of funding.

We call for the full replenishment of the Global Fund and for appropriate reform of its governance to improve accountability. We ask for technical support for our local capacities to develop and generate the data that will tell us where to spend our resources in order to make the greatest impact, and how to improve ways of measuring our success. We continue to call for the invigoration of research towards finding a cure for HIV and AIDS.

Let me end by reiterating a fundamental fact that is of great concern to our region. If the AIDS epidemic is not controlled and sustainably well resourced in southern Africa, global targets under Millennium Development Goal 6 and the other related Goals will not be met.

I thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his stewardship of the United Nations Secretariat. I also thank the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Michel Sidibé, and all other key relevant stakeholders. Their leadership in the context of this global response is needed to improve the lives of the peoples of the world. We, the SADC member States, are committed to playing our part to the best of our abilities.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Namibia aligns itself with the statement of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), which I have just delivered, and that made by Senegal on behalf of the Group of African States.

We are 30 years into the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and it has been 25 years since my country, the Republic of Namibia, experienced its first confirmed case of AIDS. Thus there is good reason for the international community to pause and to review the progress made to date and to ponder emerging challenges. Namibia has actively participated in the global review process and has hosted and chaired a number of important events that have added value to this High-level

Meeting. That includes hosting a recent visit to Namibia by Mr. Michel Sidibé, Executive Director of UNAIDS, and chairing the fifth session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health in our capital city, Windhoek, in April 2011.

At the conference, Africa's common position in this High-level Meeting was debated and agreed upon. We are grateful to be able to report that great progress has been made in our national fight against HIV/AIDS, especially with regard to the provision of lifesaving treatment for both adults and children living with HIV.

Namibia has benefited over the past decade from significant donors, especially the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; PEPFAR; and technical support from the United Nations towards an HIV response. That support, which commenced as a direct response to the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, has been critical to the important scale-up of resources and the formation of a recognized national movement aimed at assessing, analysing and proactively responding to the challenges posed by the epidemic in Namibia's national context.

As a result, we have exceeded our 2010 universal access targets for antiretroviral therapy and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission. We have also ensured our ability to continue increasing national funding, in order to cover close to 50 per cent of the national response from domestic resources. We are actively working to maintain or even increase that level.

Namibia is now dealing with the latest challenges in our national HIV/AIDS response. Our focus is on ensuring zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. That means that prevention must and will become the priority in our national response. Furthermore, enhanced scale-up, assured quality and improved adherence will be the fulcrum of treatment and the reduction of stigma and discrimination, and the promotion of human rights will be paramount. At the same time, it is incumbent on us to enhance efficiencies and productivity through integration of our efforts, strengthened alliances and partnerships and a renewed focus on innovation.

At the launch of Namibia's new national strategic framework for HIV/AIDS for the period 2011-2016, my President, His Excellency Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, called on stakeholders to work together, coordinate our efforts and create synergies among the actions of different sectors of society. Indeed, we must continue to intervene quickly, systematically and decisively in order to intensify our interventions at the policy and service-delivery levels. Sustainability and taking increasing ownership will be at the core of our response over the coming five years.

Nevertheless, we will continue to rely on international, regional and local partnerships, cooperation and solidarity. Namibia believes that this 2011 High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS is an excellent opportunity for the world to join hands and take coordinated and reinvigorated steps to ensure that we overcome the new challenges posed by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. My country, Namibia, stands ready to engage in game-changing, win-win undertakings in that regard.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Edgar Giménez, Vice-Minister of Public Health of Paraguay, who will speak on behalf of the Union of South American Nations.

Mr. Giménez (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The countries members of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) have a very similar epidemiological profile. HIV prevalence is highest in specific groups that historically have suffered from stigma and discrimination. Those groups, however, are key elements in controlling the epidemic.

Men who have sex with men, male and female sex workers, injecting and other drug users are the groups that have been most affected by AIDS in Latin America since the emergence of the first few cases. In that respect, coordination among Governments, civil society groups and communities is the means that our countries use to fight this public health problem.

The link with the promotion and protection of the human rights of those living with HIV forms the basis of our response and makes clear that HIV/AIDS is a problem that extends well beyond the health sector. The epidemic affects the development of our societies and our countries. We must therefore think of health as a human right and for that reason promoting access is a fundamental commitment for our Governments. In that spirit, we members of UNASUR Salud are here today to reaffirm our commitment to eliminating barriers to access to the prevention, treatment and support needed by people living with HIV.

The cost of drugs, reagents and other supplies is one of the biggest threats to the right to health in our countries. The countries of our region are ranked medium- and high-income countries, but such assessments do not take into account the inequalities that sadly still exist in our societies. That makes it difficult to negotiate fair prices for drugs, especially antiretrovirals and reagents.

Even more importantly, however, in our quest for universal access we could make full use of the flexibility offered by the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and of an effective implementation of the World Health Organization's Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property and its Global Health Sector Strategy for HIV/AIDS, 2011-2015. That would allow countries to fulfil their commitment to responding to the epidemic based on a view of health as a human right. To that end, we call for greater support from United Nations agencies.

The UNASUR countries are ready to bolster our action to tackle this epidemic, seeking universal access to prevention and comprehensive care for people living with HIV, as well as access to all complementary care, equitably and without discrimination of any kind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Seren Pind, Minister for Development Cooperation and Minister for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs of Denmark.

Mr. Pind (Denmark): The Secretary-General has underlined it in his report (A/65/797), the report of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS emphasizes it, and so have several speakers before me: We need a rights-based approach to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care. And we need to ensure that legal, social and political environments do not hamper an effective HIV/AIDS response.

Allow me to be even more outspoken and direct. We can provide more condoms, we can improve communication and information and we can increase access to treatment, but we will not be able to tackle the HIV epidemic efficiently as long as we do not also squarely address stigma, discrimination and violations of human rights.

Some countries find it difficult and uncomfortable to talk about human abuse of sexuality in a public health context. We often shy away from talking about what is after all a natural part of being a human being. If we are serious about fighting HIV/AIDS and if we are serious about creating an AIDS-free generation for our children and grandchildren, we need to face the reality of human sexuality. HIV is, after all, mainly spread through sexual contact.

We need to accept that men who have sex with men, sex workers and drug users are among the hardest hit in many countries. If we meet those groups with discrimination and stigma and if we violate their human rights, we will help no one. By depriving them of relevant information, counselling and testing or by not providing them access to condoms and treatment we will only fuel the epidemic further.

That is why we, in our fight against HIV and AIDS, have chosen to strengthen our efforts against stigma and discrimination. That is why the promotion of human rights is key to our approach. It was also one of several recommendations put forward after a recent review of Denmark's support to the fight against HIV/AIDS. The review focuses on Denmark's response to HIV/AIDS from 2005 to 2010. During that time, Denmark doubled its support to fighting HIV/AIDS from 500 million to 1 billion Danish kroner annually. Today, our HIV/AIDS support amounts to approximately 8 per cent of Danish official development assistance. The review will guide our approach in the years to come.

Overall, the review is very positive. It shows that the priorities in the strategy for Denmark's support to the international fight against HIV/AIDS have been and still are relevant in addressing this threat to the health and livelihoods of so many people in the developing world. It confirms our multi-sector approach whereby the combat against HIV/AIDS has been mainstreamed into all other programmes.

But looking ahead, the review also points to areas where Denmark can increase its impact on the HIV/AIDS response and use the 1 billion Danish kroner more efficiently. In light of our experience and taking the recent epidemic trends into account, we will put more emphasis on ensuring the supply and more efficient distribution of male and female condoms in Africa. The Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security of the United Nations Population Fund does a very important job in this field and deserves our encouragement and

support. Denmark will also increase its support to preventing vertical HIV transmission from mother to child by increasing access to treatment and by improving the quality of services. In doing so, we will be particularly mindful of the important link between combating HIV/AIDS and ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Denmark will increase its support to the development of innovative technologies. Vaccine development is a high-risk but also a high-return investment. No viral infectious agent has ever been brought under control until a vaccine was developed. Denmark will support those organizations that can identify and efficiently develop the most promising AIDS vaccine candidates.

We will also increase our support to the most-at-risk populations. We will do so through organizations that can provide information, testing, treatment and care directly to those groups in their local communities and thus can make a difference on the ground. I urge others to join us in this effort.

Finally, we remain committed to supporting strong national health systems. We must address prevention and treatment in a way that includes all population groups. We have seen that political leadership and national ownership are key ingredients to those ends.

The challenges that we face are still immense, but based on our lessons learned and on new knowledge and technology, the prospects for prevailing are better than ever. This requires that we use our resources even better. Denmark remains fully committed to fighting HIV/AIDS. It is a fight we must not lose. It is a fight we will not lose.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Truong Vinh Trong, Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam.

Mr. Truong Vinh Trong (Viet Nam) (*spoke in Vietnamese; English text provided by the delegation*): Viet Nam welcomes the convening of the 2011 High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS. This meeting is of great importance as the world marks 30 years of the AIDS epidemic and 10 years of implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2).

Since the General Assembly's landmark twenty-sixth special session on HIV/AIDS in 2001, the global response to the pandemic has recorded significant outcomes. The number of newly-infected people has decreased by 19 per cent over the past decade; access to antiretroviral therapy has expanded; stigma and discrimination have decreased; and the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS have gained greater respect.

On behalf of the Government and people of Viet Nam, I salute these encouraging accomplishments, which could not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the United Nations under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). They are also attributable to the active responses of leaders of Member States and many international organizations and eminent persons.

By 2010, Viet Nam had achieved many Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule, including those on poverty reduction, the universalization of education, the promotion of gender equality and the improvement of maternal and child health, which has been widely recognized by the international community. As to HIV/AIDS prevention and control, with about 0.26 per cent of the population currently HIV-infected, Viet Nam has been able to contain the rise of infection. In concrete terms, the rate of HIV prevalence among injecting drug users declined from 30 per cent in 2001 and 2002 to 17 per cent in 2010, while the number of HIV/AIDS-related deaths has declined from more than 6,000 a year to some 2,500 a year for the past two years, to cite just two statistics.

Extensive AIDS-awareness campaigns have been conducted frequently throughout Viet Nam over the past 20 years. The enactment of a law on the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and many other related legal documents has helped to encourage and facilitate the greater participation of the population and social organizations. The national strategy on HIV/AIDS prevention and control has been developed and organically integrated into the country's socio-economic development strategy. The National Committee on HIV/AIDS, Drugs and Prostitution Prevention and Control, founded over 10 years ago, has effectively strengthened the coordination of efforts among different agencies and people of all social strata so as to ensure the implementation of HIV/AIDS response measures in tandem with measures to combat drugs and prostitution. Viet Nam's experience shows that the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, drugs and

prostitution should be aligned with efforts to reduce poverty, raise social awareness and knowledge, improve health care and promote gender equality.

In this connection, the Government and people of Viet Nam highly value the meaningful support and effective cooperation extended to Viet Nam's HIV/AIDS prevention and control efforts in recent years by the United Nations, most directly through UNAIDS; co-sponsors such as UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Labour Organization, UNESCO, the World Health Organization and the World Bank; and other international organizations, especially the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief; as well as many countries and international friends.

Despite its tremendous accomplishments in national development, Viet Nam remains a poor country faced with numerous difficulties. The Vietnamese Government is fully aware that the initial gains achieved in our national response remain fragile. Viet Nam has embarked on developing the next phase of the national strategy for HIV/AIDS prevention and control, which is an essential component of our efforts to promote sustainable social and economic development for 2011-2015.

To that end, resources will be prioritized for the implementation of national targets on HIV/AIDS, as well as the international goal of universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, care, treatment and support and the latest United Nations initiative on zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. The Government and people of Viet Nam are strongly committed to these goals. At the same time, we look forward to the continued support and close and effective collaboration of the United Nations system, Member States and international organizations in this endeavour.

The AIDS epidemic remains a major global challenge and a threat to the sustainable development of many nations. It can be averted only by the joint efforts and shared responsibility of each and every member of the international community. Viet Nam endorses the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/797) on the implementation of the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262). We support the draft outcome document to be adopted at this High-level Meeting and at the same time underline the following.

First, in the context of daunting challenges to global development, the international community must sustain its constant state of alert to the HIV/AIDS problem and secure the resources needed for national and international HIV/AIDS responses. While those challenges are common, HIV and AIDS represent the most formidable challenge to poor developing countries. The fight against HIV/AIDS should therefore receive special attention and support from the international community.

Secondly, prevention is the best cure. This is particularly relevant to HIV/AIDS. Hence, undertaking comprehensive preventive measures is imperative. These may include education, communication and awareness-raising, especially among young people. Harm reduction interventions, counselling and the improvement of diagnostic capacity are also essential to efforts towards the goal of zero new infections. This requires the strong involvement of people of all walks of life and social segments, as well as the leadership of Governments.

Thirdly, people living with HIV/AIDS must have better access to health care services, including and especially antiretroviral therapy and methadone treatments. We need to facilitate the production of low-cost antiretroviral therapy and methadone through technology transfer and financing for developing countries. At the same time, importance should be attached to early detection and continuous treatment for HIV-infected people.

I wish the Meeting great success. May the President and all present enjoy an abundance of health.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Susan Rice, member of the Cabinet of the President of the United States of America.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I am honoured to represent the United States at this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

Today, 30 years after the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention first reported on the condition that would eventually become known as HIV, the world has proven that we can tackle this pandemic. But going forward, all of us must do more.

We call today on our fellow donors and partners — great and small — to increase their investments and to redouble their commitment.

We do so because the history of the pandemic shows how much we can accomplish when we stand together. In 2001, when the General Assembly held its special session, the global HIV/AIDS situation was grave. From 1981 to 2001, nearly 58 million people worldwide were infected. More than 25 million people died. Health systems buckled under the weight of the pandemic.

The American people were moved by that sweeping tragedy, and we urged the international community to come together in a spirit of compassion and concern. The General Assembly's 2001 special session on HIV/AIDS underscored our shared responsibility to respond.

My Government is proud to have long been a leader in this global fight. The United States played a central role in establishing the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In 2002, the United States made the founding pledge to the Global Fund, and today we are proud to remain by far its largest single donor. We made our first-ever multi-year pledge to the Global Fund this year, and we are working closely with the Fund on a robust reform agenda that will let it save even more lives.

In 2003, the United States created the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, the largest international response to a single disease that any country has ever mounted. When PEPFAR was launched, fewer than 50,000 people in all sub-Saharan Africa had access to treatment. By September 2010, PEPFAR had supported treatment for more than 3.2 million people, the vast majority of them in Africa.

Today, more than 3.8 million orphans and vulnerable children also receive support from PEPFAR that gives them education, nutrition and the chance of a better life. One particular focus of the United States efforts has been the reduction in the mother-to-child transmission of HIV. In 2010, programmes supported by PEPFAR provided HIV counselling and testing to more than 8.6 million pregnant women. More than 600,000 of them tested positive for HIV and received antiretroviral drugs to prevent mother-to-child transmission, thereby saving about 114,000 babies from HIV infection.

So, today, let us renew our common commitment to achieve a generation free of HIV. The United States also remains committed to responding to the serious HIV epidemic that we face here at home. In all, more than 1.7 million Americans have become infected with HIV. More than 600,000 have died of AIDS, and more than 50,000 people become infected with HIV each year.

In July 2010, the United States released the first comprehensive National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the United States to provide a road map for reducing the number of new HIV infections, increasing access to care for people living with HIV, and reducing HIV-related health disparities.

We remain proud that the United States currently provides about 58 per cent of all donor-Government resources to respond to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. That stems from an abiding commitment. President Bush launched PEPFAR, and President Obama has ramped it up and combined it with other programmes under the United States Global Health Initiative. That means that we get better overall health outcomes as we tackle HIV and better AIDS outcomes as we tackle maternal and child health, neglected tropical diseases and other crucial dimensions of global public health. The United States has long been a leader in saving lives and restoring hope, and we will not let up now.

But the global HIV/AIDS challenge cannot be met by any one country alone. AIDS is truly a global crisis, and it requires a truly global response. Today, we urge our fellow donors and the private sector to do more, to give more and to invest more. To sustain the fight over the long term, affected countries themselves must provide the resources, based on their economic capacities, to protect their citizens from HIV/AIDS. Other donor countries must also increase their commitment to the fight, as, again, must the private sector.

At the same time, we should take a moment today to salute the champions of the fight against HIV/AIDS in the worst-affected countries — Governments that have risen to defend their citizens, communities that have rallied around those in need, and civil society groups and individuals whose activism and simple decency have offered hope and comfort in hours of grief and fear. They are the unsung heroes of this

battle. The best way we can honour them and their dedication is to join together in redoubling our fight.

We must do more than maintain the gains that we have made. We must expand on them. Too many people are counting on us. Too many lives can and must still be saved. The declaration that we will adopt at this Meeting reflects a strong and shared commitment. We urge all our fellow Member States to join in giving that commitment greater meaning and power, to come together, to lead and to rise to this grave and urgent challenge.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdelkader Messahel, Minister for Maghrebian and African Affairs of Algeria.

Mr. Messahel (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Coming 10 years after our Assembly's adoption of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2), our High-level Meeting is an important gathering. It provides us with the opportunity to take stock of progress made, to identify the obstacles that remain, and to bolster the mobilization of all around strategies that have been refined and strengthened in the light of lessons learned from a decade of experience on overcoming the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

I would first of all like to pay tribute to the President for the outstanding leadership and commitment that he has shown throughout the preparations for our meeting. I also commend all stakeholders in the global partnership, which has taken on form and substance in order to tackle a health challenge that the Security Council has rightly described as a threat to the security of us all. I would particularly like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of our Organization and to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, who have submitted valuable, action-oriented recommendations for our consideration.

Since its appearance around 30 years ago, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which has already caused more than 30 million deaths, has continued to expand. In 2009, 33 million people were HIV positive, a 27 per cent increase from 1999. Of that total, 66 per cent live in Africa, where HIV/AIDS, more than just a health scourge, is also in many cases a serious obstacle to socio-economic development because of the heavy toll it exacts on the continent's human capital and of the cost of programmes of prevention and care. In other words, the challenge of HIV/AIDS remains formidable, despite the progress that has been made in 10 years in terms of access to care.

Indeed, today 6 million patients have access to antiretrovirals in middle- and low-income countries, which is 37 per cent of the global average. For Africa in particular, that rate represents a notable increase, since in 2000 it was only 5 per cent. However, it is still broadly insufficient, since two thirds of the ill people are still without access to care. Caring for orphans — who now number around 16 million, the vast majority of whom are in Africa — and the rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS, which are high compared to those of other regions, also demonstrate the significant socio-economic burden the epidemic has inflicted.

While the resources allocated to the fight against HIV/AIDS, at both the national and international levels, have grown significantly over the last 10 years, their drop in 2009 and current trend towards stagnation are a source of concern. Mobilizing additional resources must be a key priority for the international community.

Effectively combating the spread of HIV/AIDS also requires that we contain and reverse the escalating cost of prevention and health care to ensure the broadest possible access to them. In this regard, the growing difficulties faced by countries that want the flexibility of access to essential medicines introduced by the Doha Declaration regarding Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and public health are likely to weaken one of the pillars of the Declaration of Commitment. It is thus crucial that we remove the barriers that bilateral and regional trade agreements have erected against exports, imports and the production of generic medicines.

Cooperation and partnership with the pharmaceutical industry are also essential in order to speed up research into a vaccine and new, less toxic medicines that are longer lasting and easier to use. Upstream, too, much remains to be done to improve and simplify prevention and screening technologies. All this would facilitate greater community involvement in prevention and care activities and would promote earlier, and thus less expensive, treatment of patients.

The fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, particularly in Africa, also requires strengthening health systems so that they may better meet the

demands stemming not only from HIV/AIDS but also from tuberculosis, malaria and the requirements of maternal and child health. Integrated treatment would create synergies that would have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

All these areas have already been covered by the Abuja Declaration adopted at the Organization of African Unity summit on AIDS in April 2001, whose implementation has subsequently been regularly monitored by African Union entities.

To revitalize and reinforce the willingness of the international community to tackle this global plague in a spirit of solidarity and partnership, the key terms "zero infections", "zero discrimination" and "zero deaths" are undoubtedly the galvanizing themes that can guide national and international efforts to action that is most likely to bear results.

The objectives proposed by the Secretary-General deserve our commitment, because we believe they are achievable if the needs in terms of the appropriate capacities, resources and technologies are delivered through a strengthened international partnership. Moreover, at a time when efforts are turning towards making up for lost time in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the imperatives surrounding the fight against poverty and renewal of the international partnership for development are most pertinent if we wish to curb the advance of illnesses, push back poverty and protect the health of women and children.

For its part, Algeria has sought since 1989 to implement a multidimensional and multisectoral approach by supplying the country with 61 anonymous screening centres, a national blood bank and eight treatment centres. This approach will enable us to contain the spread of HIV/AIDS, provide free access to medicines and antiretrovirals and significantly reduce the number of deaths caused by the virus and related infections. The very low rate of HIV/AIDS in Algeria is a testament to the appropriateness of this approach and encourages us to continue our efforts to make new progress in combating this illness.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Minister of Health and Family Welfare of India.

Mr. Azad (India): At the outset, I would like to compliment the President of the General Assembly on organizing this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS. The Secretary-General's report (A/65/797) has shown that the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to outpace the response to contain and prevent its spread. That situation persists despite three decades of concerted effort to combat this epidemic.

Permit me with all humility to suggest that, along with declarations, we need an effective scaling up of our actions and resources if we wish to steal a march on this truly global epidemic. Our actions must match our words.

India has a strong prevention programme, which goes hand in hand with care, support and treatment. We have been able to contain the epidemic with a prevalence of just 0.31 per cent. We have also brought about a decline of 50 per cent in new infections annually. Over the last decade, we have seen evidence of the epidemic's stabilization, with definite success in reversal in some parts of the country. Our focus has been on high-risk groups, expanding services and improving access to antiretroviral therapy. The rollout of universal access to second-line antiretroviral therapy and early infant diagnosis is well advanced.

We are now at the threshold of commencing the next phase of the National AIDS Control Programme IV. Mother-to-child transmission of infection continues to be a great challenge. We aspire to achieve zero communication in newborns. Our strategy in India is to convert the 27 million annual pregnancies into institutional deliveries for efficacious preventive interventions through better detection of HIV positivity among pregnant women.

This year onwards, institutional deliveries at government health institutions are being made cashless. That means that diagnostic tests, drugs, diet and transport will be provided free of cost to all pregnant women and sick newborns. I am confident that this significant step will help in the elimination of HIV transmission from the mother to her newborn, in addition to further reducing the infant and maternal mortality rates and improving immunization levels.

We are also launching a new initiative to deliver male and female contraceptives at the household level.

We are conscious that persons infected with and affected by HIV still face stigma. That is not only a barrier to accessing services, but also a violation of

their rights. India is committed to fighting this stigma so that people living with HIV can live lives of dignity.

At today's critical juncture in our efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, it is imperative that the international community remain highly engaged. A foremost requirement is to bridge the resource gap. It is essential that the international community continue to commit funds commensurate with the requirement of containing HIV/AIDS.

In addition, the international community has to dismantle barriers that obstruct universal access to treatment. A key barrier is the high cost of antiretroviral medicines. Pharmaceutical companies in my country have been providing high-quality and affordable medicines, not only to India but also to approximately 200 countries. I would also like to take this opportunity to make it abundantly clear that those generic drugs are not cheap in terms of quality. It is important that considerations of commerce and profitability are not used to erect artificial barriers in matters of life and death.

I would also like to urge the international community to work together to remove barriers in the form of intellectual property rights and other barriers. We must ensure that all flexibilities in Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights must be used towards a better availability of affordable medicines. Therefore, we need proactive and collective action from the international community to dismantle these barriers and improve the availability of accessible, affordable and quality medicines for the needy and impoverished.

With these words, let me join others in reaffirming India's strong commitment and firm resolve to fight this epidemic in a concerted and more collaborative manner.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Bin Khalid Al Qahtani, Minister of Health of Qatar.

Mr. Al Qahtani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased at the outset to convey to the Assembly the warm regards of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, and his wishes for the success of the work of this important high-level meeting. This meeting is aimed at strengthening cooperation in the area of promoting the response of the international community to the spread of HIV/AIDS, re-emphasizing the need for full and effective implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2), adopted by the General Assembly in 2001, and the Political Declaration on AIDS (resolution 60/262), adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, reaffirming its support for the relevant resolutions.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations entities concerned with the reduction of the spread of AIDS for the pivotal role they play in strengthening the response of the international community to HIV/AIDS and to raising global awareness of the danger posed by this epidemic to public health and sustainable development in many countries of the world and its negative impact on economic growth in those countries.

Mrs. Waffa-Ogoo (Gambia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I would also like to underline the commitment of the State of Qatar to support all efforts to reduce the spread of the epidemic and to promote measures that would reduce its negative impact on people living with the virus.

We have less than four years to achieve, by 2015, the goal of halting the spread of HIV and of beginning to reverse it. We must point out here that the international community must intensify its efforts; work on quickly implementing all the commitments it has made in past years to address the epidemic; take new and creative measures aimed at achieving that goal; undertake greater efforts in terms of prevention programmes, treatment, care and support for, and protection of the rights of, people living with the virus, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against them; and ensure a reliable supply of antiretroviral medicines. This last goal is more attainable today than ever before, based on the effectiveness of these medicines in the most vulnerable societies.

No one can deny the positive impact of the international efforts aimed at raising awareness about reducing the spread of HIV. We in Qatar have been eager to be bound by previous relevant decisions, the most important of which is the provision of comprehensive care for people living with HIV/AIDS and the provision of support for them and for their families. We have worked to reduce the spread of the

disease through the programmes of the National Committee on HIV/AIDS, although the rate of infection remains low in our country. It is to be noted that we provide free treatment for those living with AIDS.

The Gulf Cooperation Council member States renewed their commitment to HIV-positive people at their meeting held in Saudi Arabia on 16 April 2011, at which we decided to combat AIDS in all fields and where a recommendation was made to provide comprehensive services including awareness-raising, prevention, diagnosis, treatment and integrated care.

The leaders of the Group of Eight (G-8) countries agreed in 2005 to provide additional aid in the amount of $50 billion aimed at combating the epidemic, of which $25 billion would go to Africa, by the year 2010. They identified new targets for universal access to antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS, universal primary education and basic health care free of charge.

Again in 2007, the leaders of the G-8 reaffirmed their commitment to increasing development aid and announced an additional $60 billion to fight AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. However, those commitments have in general not been respected. This will not help the international response to the pandemic, especially in developing countries, least developed countries and African and sub-Saharan countries.

Although the number of people living with HIV who receive antiretroviral medication exceeds 50 million, there are more than 10 million others who need immediate treatment. We therefore reiterate our call on the international community to intensify its efforts to help those countries to deal effectively with the epidemic.

However, this can be achieved as desired only if the major countries fulfil their financial pledges, since no matter what efforts are made by developing and least developed countries to fight HIV, they may not be effective in the absence of international support. In that regard, we should renew the commitments we made and accelerate their fulfilment by strengthening existing funding mechanisms and ensuring the continuation of the support needed by low- and middle-income countries in the areas of awareness, diagnosis and treatment.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nuth Sokhom, Senior Minister and Chair of the National AIDS Authority of Cambodia.

Mr. Sokhom (Cambodia): First of all, on behalf of Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, may I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for honouring Cambodia by inviting us to this High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS. May I also take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the convening of this important event and for this initiative to monitor progress and challenges and to find the way forward to solve the emerging issues related to HIV and AIDS.

On this auspicious occasion, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Cambodian people, may I extend my deep respect and gratitude to the Governments and peoples of friendly countries, our development partners, civil society organizations and the United Nations for their kind funding support, which has enabled us to achieve Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals. Because of that proud accomplishment, we received the United Nations Millennium Development Goals Award from the United Nations on 19 September 2010. Our success in Cambodia is a result of the combined collaborative efforts of legislative institutions, the Government, civil society organizations, the private sector, development partners, people living with HIV and AIDS and the networks of the most-at-risk populations.

Allow me to take this opportunity to pinpoint the following key achievements.

First, as a result of the great commitment and wisdom of our Prime Minister, in 1999 our National AIDS Authority was created as a leading mechanism of our comprehensive and multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS. It has now been extended at the regional level across the country. Since 1999, the 100 per cent condom use programme has been implemented all over the country. To ensure the effectiveness of our comprehensive response, the law on the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS was officially promulgated in 2002.

Secondly, with the deep and compassionate support of His Majesty the King and the active participation of our First Lady, Chair of the Cambodian Red Cross, there has been a remarkable reduction

across the country with regard to stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and AIDS, including orphans and vulnerable children and their families.

Thirdly, Cambodia has clear policies and strategies to address the most-at-risk populations as a result of having created an enabling environment that in particular includes the active participation of communities and faith-based organizations.

Fourthly, through the initiative of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Cambodia has been able to scale up the effectiveness of its prevention, care, treatment and support programmes to reach its targets on group, geographic and service coverage, nearly achieving our universal access target by 2010.

Cambodia has been successful in controlling the first wave of HIV and AIDS in the past decades. However, we are very concerned about the emerging situation and its underlying determinants. We are facing a second HIV and AIDS wave, in which the most-at-risk populations are being exposed to very fast-evolving conditions. Entertainment workers face special difficulties in implementing the 100 per cent condom use programme. There are increasing numbers of men who have sex with men and transgender people in cities and in provinces. Oral and injected drug use has significantly increased, especially among young people. Increased internal and cross-border mobility has increased the ranks of the vulnerable migrant and mobile population.

With the participation of all concerned stakeholders, especially development partners, we have developed our third national strategic plan for a comprehensive and multisectoral response to HIV/AIDS for the period 2011 to 2015, which includes seven strategic areas of focus. As part of that plan, seven national working groups have been assigned to take the lead in managing their respective priorities in each strategy area and to monitor their progress against targets. Along with that initiative, we are very mindful about capitalizing on deconcentration and decentralization efforts to promote a comprehensive and multisectoral response to HIV and AIDS that includes gender equity, so as to ensure the sustainability of our response by strengthening national and regional mechanisms.

At this historic meeting, I would like to take the opportunity to respectfully request bilateral and multilateral donors, and especially the Global Fund, to continue to help the Cambodian people in confronting the second wave of HIV and AIDS, as a contribution to the regional and global effort to pursue the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Once again, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Cambodian people, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude and great appreciation for the efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, along with the former Secretary-General, for their initiative in organizing the 2001 special session of the General Assembly and this High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS, and especially for the creation of the Global Fund to assist poor countries, including Cambodia. I wish the Assembly success at this High-level Meeting.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Ángel Córdova Villalobos, Minister for Health of Mexico.

Mr. Córdova (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We know that there are roughly 33.3 million people living with HIV in the world today and that new infections have declined by 20 per cent in the past decade. In what is perhaps one of the most visible advances towards universal access, we see that global coverage for antiretroviral treatment reached 36 per cent in 2009. Latin America is now the region with the highest coverage of antiretroviral treatment for those in need, some 51 per cent of whom receive it.

Countries must combine efforts and build regional and global alliances among nations and with other actors, including civil society organizations, people living with HIV, the academic and scientific communities, the United Nations and other cooperation authorities in order to respond effectively to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and meet the goals to which our countries committed in adopting the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262), and thus also Millennium Development Goal 6.

The time has come to reaffirm our obligation to forge a vigorous, effective and sustainable multisectoral response for future decades. In order to improve that response to the epidemic and make more it effective, I would like to highlight the following

points. It is crucial that all countries set up sustainable mechanisms as soon as possible to provide antiretroviral treatment to all those in medical need, in a way that is timely, sustainable and permanently free of cost to the user. We must also work to reduce the costs and purchase price of antiretroviral treatment in low- and middle-income countries.

We also call for a redoubling of efforts to significantly step up prevention and health promotion strategies with a focus on those groups at greatest risk and most vulnerable to HIV, without neglecting other actions targeting the wider population.

As the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS campaign states, "know your epidemic, know your response". For Mexico, it is crucial that, in the context of a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS, we generate the best possible data so as to identify the groups affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the social and personal health factors in play in that context.

The President returned to the Chair.

Along with all of the above, it is also extremely important to ensure greater visibility and attention to the needs of men who have sex with men, female and male sex workers, drug users, transsexuals and transgender persons, the youngest of whom are the most vulnerable of all. We must also keep in mind that adolescents and young people, migrant populations, vulnerable women and incarcerated persons are also in situations of heightened vulnerability to HIV infection.

Another priority for Mexico is the elimination of the vertical transmission of HIV and congenital syphilis. We are stepping up our efforts to implement immediate action. It is unacceptable that boys and girls continue to be born with HIV and/or syphilis. We will continue to strive to convince Governments of other countries of the importance of promoting user-friendly health services and comprehensive sex education as foundations for preventing new HIV infections in present and future generations.

To that end, we call on all countries represented here today to ensure that their actions are based on respect for human rights and to incorporate a focus on gender equality that allows for an effective response to HIV/AIDS that is free of stigma, discrimination, homophobia, transphobia and any type of violence. If we can forge a response to HIV/AIDS that encompasses all of these elements, we will have a robust and successful response to this epidemic.

This is not the time for complacency or censorship. Now is the time to tackle AIDS head on in our areas of expertise — Governments, the scientific community, civil society and the United Nations system. Let us move forward united.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Esther Murugi Mathenge, Minister of State for Special Programmes of Kenya.

Ms. Mathenge (Kenya): I bring the Assembly greetings from my President, His Excellency Mr. Mwai Kibaki, and the people of Kenya.

I take this opportunity to commend you, Mr. President, and the Chairpersons of the sessions during this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS for your dedication in facilitating our deliberations. Likewise, I express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his detailed and focused reports on issues pertinent to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. My delegation joins the international community in paying tribute to the souls lost to the scourge of HIV/AIDS and to those infected and affected by it.

Kenya is one of the 189 countries that adopted the Declaration of Commitment on HIV and AIDS (resolution S-26/2) at the special session on AIDS in 2001. It is now 10 years since the Declaration was adopted, and Kenya has taken stock of progress made so far in our national response to HIV and AIDS.

Kenya has been implementing a multisectoral response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic since 1999 and has currently rolled out its evidence-informed third Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan 2009-2013, based on the premise of "know your epidemic, know your response". The Kenyan HIV epidemic has the characteristics of both a generalized epidemic among the mainstream population and a concentrated epidemic among certain key affected populations. These are men who have sex with men, the prison population, sex workers and their clients, and people who inject or use drugs.

A number of milestones have been achieved to date. The number of individuals aged 15 years and above who have received testing and counselling has steadily increased from 860,000 in 2008 to 5,738,282 in 2010. However, we would like to scale this up to at least 80 per cent of all eligible people by 2015. The

national target for coverage for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission was 80 per cent, but we had surpassed this, reaching 82 per cent, by December 2010. We want to scale this up to 100 per cent by 2013.

Knowledge on prevention has increased. Condom demand has risen from 8 million per month in 2005 to 20 million per month in 2011. Voluntary male medical circumcision rates have risen. Over 200,000 adult men from non-circumcising communities within the Republic have been circumcised under this programme since its inception in 2009.

Treatment, care and nutrition have improved. Currently 432,000 out of 650,000 people requiring antiretroviral therapy are receiving it. This is based on World Health Organization guidelines. The number of people on antiretroviral therapy should be scaled up to 80 per cent by 2015. Retention of treatment, after 12, 24 and 60 months, stood at 80, 72 and 71 per cent, respectively. We want to increase these numbers to 85 per cent across the board.

On the issue of orphans and vulnerable children, by 2009 we had close to 1.2 million children who had lost either one or both parents to HIV and AIDS. We have a cash transfer programme that now reaches 300,000 girls and boys.

We have encountered a number of challenges. First is the feminization of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, which is driven largely by biological factors, inadequate economic empowerment and access to sexual and reproductive health services, and gender-based violence.

Stigma, discrimination and widespread homophobia occur among the key affected populations. HIV prevalence has stabilized in Kenya at between 6 and 7 per cent over the past 5 years. However, the number of annual new infections is still very high, at 122,000 — 100,000 adults and 22,000 children. We hope to reduce that number by 50 per cent by 2013 and to achieve zero new infections in children by 2015. There are still more than 300,000 people in Kenya who are eligible for antiretroviral treatment but are not receiving it.

We call for global solidarity in combating stigma, discrimination and the exclusion of key affected populations through the re-examining of punitive laws in the context of the human rights of all people and protecting the sexual and reproductive health of women and girls.

We also call for strong, inspiring, visionary and informed leadership, which is required not only from the Government but from all players. A balance also needs to be struck between prevention, treatment, care and support by ensuring national ownership and the appropriate resourcing of HIV responses, the provision of high-quality sexuality education and reproductive health services, and harm reduction while endeavouring to improve access to HIV commodities and affordable antiretroviral therapy. We should also embrace new scientific evidence in prevention.

We call upon the international community to invest in the development of new HIV and tuberculosis prevention and treatment technologies suitable to the regions most affected. That is important because, as a country, we have adopted the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Naman Keïta, Minister of Health of Guinea.

Mr. Keïta (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to convey to all present, on behalf of the President of my country, Mr. Alpha Condé, and the Government of Guinea, our sincere greetings and to express my satisfaction at being able to participate in this High-level Meeting.

Guinea is a country where national HIV prevalence is relatively low, at 1.5 per cent; however, the epidemic is affecting sectors that are key to socio-economic development in my country. The groups most affected are men in the uniformed services, fishermen, truckers and miners; prevalence in those groups ranges from 5 to 6 per cent.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, Guinea has affirmed its commitment to eradicate HIV. Concrete results have been achieved, in particular with the support of technical and financial partners, to which we would like to express our sincere gratitude. However, those achievements have not been sufficient, and major challenges include the insufficient national leadership and a dearth of local financing.

Given countries' dependence on external financing, the global economic crisis that is affecting

donors and the increasing poverty in African countries, the achievements that have been made in addressing the issue of AIDS are now at risk. That is why combating HIV/AIDS is one of the priorities of the new Government of Guinea. Concrete measures have been taken include greater involvement by the Prime Minister, the setting up of a line of credit in the national budget, and the establishment of a mechanism for the local mobilization of resources.

As we call once again for technical and financial partners to support Guinea in particular and African countries in general, my President is also launching an appeal to his peers with a view to devising innovative solutions in connection with the local financing of the response at the national and continental levels, including with respect to the production of medication.

Long live African solidarity, and long live international cooperation. Together we will defeat AIDS.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Vabah Gayflor, Minister of Gender and Development of Liberia.

Ms. Gayflor (Liberia): I bring warm greetings from Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia, and the people of Liberia. I should like also to thank the organizers of this important High-level Meeting devoted to a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262).

This meeting is taking place at a crucial time. In just under four years, by 2015, the world community will be taking stock of our individual and collective efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Of particular relevance to today's gathering is MDG Goal 6, which reflects our collective ambition to halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2015.

Our aspiration in Liberia, in responding to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, is to create an HIV/AIDS-free society, and thereby contribute to the creation of a global community of societies free of HIV/AIDS. Our collective vision of a world free from the scourge of HIV and AIDS brings us all together to provide the leadership needed to defeat this global pandemic.

The global battle against HIV and AIDS is a major challenge for us all. Recognizing the magnitude of this battle, Liberia has launched a new phase of our HIV prevention programme which targets young people aged 15 to 25 years. At the same time, we will keep in sharp focus the needs of women, who continue to bear a disproportionate burden of the disease in Liberia and globally.

At the end of 2011, Liberia will complete the implementation of its first post-war development agenda, the poverty reduction strategy. Through the strategy, Liberia is accelerating the process of recovery and development after more than 14 years of civil conflict. The issue of HIV/AIDS has been mainstreamed into each of the four pillars of the strategy and therefore reflects the shared responsibilities of all ministries and agencies.

From an historical perspective, the first case of AIDS was diagnosed in Liberia in 1986. In response, the Government of Liberia created a national AIDS control programme. In 1987, a national AIDS commission was also established. However, due to the civil crisis, those programmes fell apart in 1990. Today, we are pleased to report that since 2007 the National AIDS Control Program has been expanded and restructured. In 2007 the National AIDS Commission was similarly reconstituted under the leadership of the President, who chairs it personally. Progressive measures such as these have enabled the Government to expand treatment to all of Liberia's 15 counties.

Additionally, our reconstituted AIDS Authority has developed a new national strategy, guided by the "Three Ones" principles of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS: one national AIDS authority, one national strategic framework and one national monitoring and evaluation system.

Liberia has also stepped up data collection to determine the prevalence of HIV and AIDS in the country. Information is now available on HIV prevalence from a 2007 demographic and health survey and three prenatal sentinel surveillance surveys carried out between 2006 and 2008. In 2007, surveys showed a national HIV prevalence of 1.5 per cent among the general population, with rates for women at 1.8 per cent and for men at 1.2 per cent, of a total population of 3.5 million. In 2008, the prenatal surveillance data

also showed that more women were infected, with a prevalence of 4 per cent.

Women and girls constitute 58 per cent of the 36,000 people living with HIV in Liberia. The differences in HIV prevalence between women and men are particularly striking in the younger age groups, with three times more women than men in the 15-to-24-year-old age group.

Given its small size and population, Liberia cannot ignore the impact this pandemic has had on national efforts to achieve social and economic recovery and development. We also believe that this disease presents a very serious challenge to our human development goals, and we therefore support the Secretary-General's report (A/65/797), which urges zero new infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

With regard to its achievements to date, the Government of Liberia is proud of the modest gains in its AIDS response in recent years, made possible through strong partnerships with multilateral and bilateral donors. Here I would like to make special mention of the unwavering support provided by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, which was simply indispensable. My Government therefore joins others in appealing to donors to replenish the Global Fund in order to advance work towards achieving the three zeros.

I would like to share a few of the gains made in our AIDS response. We have developed a monitoring and evaluation plan with specific gender indicators. Of the 10,028 persons needing treatment, 42 per cent have been placed on antiretroviral therapy. Testing and counselling services for expectant mothers have been expanded by increasing the number of services for preventing mother-to-child transmission from 29 to 162. We have also strengthened the national network of persons living with HIV and AIDS so as to support prevention and treatment efforts.

Today Liberia is resolved to fight HIV and AIDS. To succeed, we must maintain an environment of peace and stability. We must also address poverty and illiteracy, consistently promote the rights of women and girls, improve our health care system and respond to the other important targets expressed in the Millennium Development Goals.

We wish to offer our appreciation to the Member States of the United Nations for the investments made in Liberia through the United Nations Mission in Liberia and other United Nations agencies. We will continue to count on the leadership of every Member State to help us sustain the gains Liberia has made and to confront and overcome the threat that HIV and AIDS pose to our aspirations for national development.

Clearly, we face a daunting challenge, and we all remain responsible partners in the global fight against the disease. It takes commitment, the right strategy and the collective efforts of all of us to achieve this goal. There is no better time than now, when our collective efforts are most needed in the global battle against HIV and AIDS.

We would once again like to express our appreciation and to thank and congratulate you, Mr. President, and the world body that continues to stand with every one of us as we fight this battle with AIDS.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ruhal Haque, Minister of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh.

Mr. Haque (Bangladesh): Mr. President, I thank you for presiding over this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS. I would like to convey our appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and to the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Mr. Michel Sidibé, for their comprehensive briefings this morning. Our thanks also go to Ms. Tetyana Afanasiadi of the Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS and Ms. Mathilde Krim of the Foundation for AIDS Research for their speeches.

At the outset, I would like to recall the meeting our Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, had with the Executive Director of UNAIDS in Geneva. Our honourable Prime Minister committed to supporting an enhanced national response to HIV/AIDS. She could not be here, due to other duties, and asked me to represent her.

This High-level Meeting demonstrates the willingness and commitment of Member States to banish the scourge of HIV and AIDS from our planet. I believe it will provide a real opportunity for countries to commit to finding new ways forward in tackling AIDS and to produce a strong declaration to guide

global efforts to reach universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support by 2015. The attendance of a good number of civil society representatives and other actors in the AIDS movement has also added value to our collective response to curbing the menace.

We have had success in fighting HIV/AIDS in the past as a result of global initiatives. However, it is a matter of great concern that despite substantial progress over the three decades since AIDS was first reported, more than 7,000 new cases of HIV infection occur every day, with women and adolescent girls facing a disproportionately higher risk.

It is disheartening to note that people between the ages of 15 and 24 accounted for 41 per cent of new infections among adults in 2009. Worldwide, an estimated 5 million young people in that age group were living with HIV. For most of them, HIV infection is the result of biological vulnerability, social inequality, neglect, exclusion and violations that occur with the knowledge of families, communities and social and political leaders.

It is therefore high time to build a chain of prevention to keep adolescents and young people informed, protected and healthy. We have included HIV/AIDS education in our national curriculum for grades 6 to 12. We must protect adolescent girls and young women so that the journey from childhood to adulthood is not thwarted by HIV. I urge family members, teachers and community leaders to play a constructive role in setting strong standards for responsible behaviour and advocating for the full range of services needed for young people to stay healthy.

The HIV and AIDS epidemic inflicts a disproportionate burden on women and girls and is a major hindrance to the empowerment of women and to gender equality. I urge Member States, relevant United Nations entities and other pertinent stakeholders to support the development and strengthening of the capacities of national health systems so that women living with HIV are provided with sufficient assistance.

Bangladesh is still considered a country with low HIV/AIDS prevalence. However, it is highly vulnerable to it. There are 2,088 HIV-positive and 850 full-blown AIDS-infected patients in the country, and the HIV prevalence in the adult population is less than 0.01 per cent. Sometimes, HIV infection is unreported because there is also a social stigma attached to it.

The underlying causes of the epidemic include poverty, gender inequality and the high mobility of the population, all of which are present in Bangladesh, a densely populated country with about 150 million inhabitants. Emigration to other countries for employment is very common, particularly among younger people. There is a considerable risk to that group, and we support international initiatives on HIV/AIDS services for migrant populations. Through girls' education and gender-based development movements, Bangladesh has made progress in promoting gender equality in the past two decades.

However, the low level of knowledge, low condom use, unsafe professional blood donations, the lack of an appropriate environment, men having sex with men and the spread of disease in neighbouring countries could all contribute to the spread of HIV in Bangladesh. The level of infection among injecting drug users also poses a risk. We must continue to provide support to the population most at risk. My delegation believes that there is a significant risk of HIV in Bangladesh. Global and regional efforts, together with national efforts, must be continued to prevent it. I draw the attention of relevant stakeholders to that factor.

Before concluding, my delegation calls upon developed countries to enhance financial support to developing countries, including through capacity building and the elimination of barriers, such as intellectual property rights, to lower the cost of medicines or make them affordable, so as to enhance their preventive capacity to fight the threat of HIV/AIDS. We also call for a global initiative for access to generic antiretroviral treatment.

Finally, we emphasize that, considering the threat, there is no scope for complacency. We should aim for zero infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths through concerted efforts and strategies, which are the shared responsibility of all of us on this planet.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. John Seakgosing, Minister for Public Health of the Republic of Botswana.

Mr. Seakgosing (Botswana): Botswana is indeed privileged to be here on this occasion to join other nations and delegations at this important High-level Meeting, which provides us all with an opportunity to collectively reaffirm our commitment and resolve to

realize the results of the declarations that we have made to respond to this singular epidemic, which remains a global crisis.

While, over the past decade, our country has embarked on a number of intensive interventions to address the epidemic, our people continue to be infected. The sobering reality is that the estimated HIV prevalence among the general population in Botswana remains significantly high at 17.6 per cent, which translates into about 350,000 people living with the HIV infection. The HIV prevalence among Botswana women is about 20.4 per cent, compared to 14.2 per cent prevalence among men. That reflects the growing feminization of the epidemic at home, as well as in the rest of the world.

However, we have made some positive achievements towards universal access. The percentage of HIV-positive pregnant women receiving the complete course of antiretroviral treatment to reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission stands at 94 per cent — 3 percentage points short of our universal access target of 97 per cent. Also, we have been able to surpass the global elimination target of less than 5 per cent mother-to-child transmission. Now, our new target is a further 1 per cent reduction.

In Botswana, more than 93 per cent of adults and children starting antiretroviral therapy survive beyond the first 12 months, as compared to our target of 97 per cent. We have also achieved 100 per cent coverage for orphans and vulnerable children in need of social and material support.

Such successes have been realized through strong leadership at the political and national levels. Significant domestic resources have and continue to be channelled into the national response. Sacrifices have been made in development objectives so as to ensure access to quality HIV and AIDS services for all who need them, especially medication. That reflects Botswana's commitment to the full realization of the right of all to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.

The Government of Botswana continues to seek new and innovative ways to meet the challenges of universal access within the context of a dynamic and rapidly changing epidemic. We recently launched our second national strategic framework for HIV and AIDS, for the period 2010 2016. It outlines the country's prioritized intervention, namely, in the areas of prevention, systems strengthening, strategic information management and the scaling up of treatment, care and support. Such strategic priorities are being given significant thrust through the development of a cost-stagnation operational plan.

It makes us very proud that Botswana's national goal of zero new infections, as enshrined in our developmental Vision 2016, has been adopted as the new global goal. In order to achieve such a goal, our efforts will focus on a sound balance between behavioural and biomedical prevention interventions, within our specific social, cultural, economic and structural determinants of risk and vulnerability.

Central to all those efforts is respect for human rights and the expansion of service delivery to reach key affected populations, including those most at risk. The Government of Botswana continues to work to ensure that HIV investments reflect the imperative of women's empowerment and gender equality. We are adopting the Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to ensure that our national response is adequately and comprehensively sensitive to their needs.

To that end, we welcome the establishment of UN-Women and look forward to working with it at the country level to strengthen our efforts to address gender inequalities and gender-based abuse and violence and to increase the capacity of women and adolescent girls to protect themselves from the risk of HIV infection.

We shall continue to explore all possible means to forge ahead to meet new and ambitious targets while sustaining the level of coverage and service quality we have already attained. We are dedicated to making gains in efficiency and cost-effectiveness while examining alternative and innovative mechanisms for increasing domestic resources available for the response.

We are also committed to achieving catalytic synergies between the response to HIV/AIDS and other important development objectives. But the reality is that in order to accelerate progress towards a future of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths, without eroding the gains of the past decade, Botswana will require sustained financial commitments from the United Nations family, donor Governments and the Global Fund.

We have come so far, but there is a long road ahead. Botswana joins its fellow Member States here assembled in reaffirming its commitment to implementing the declarations we have made and urges the international community not to become complacent in the face of long-term demands and responsibilities. We stand at the brink of global change and we must show solidarity, leadership and courage if we are to achieve our goals and create a world without HIV and AIDS.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Keith Mondesir, Minister of Health, Wellness, Family Affairs, National Mobilisation and Gender Relations of Saint Lucia.

Mr. Mondesir (Saint Lucia): Saint Lucia aligns itself with the statement made by the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, who spoke on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

The Caribbean has been identified as the region with the second highest prevalence of HIV infection among adult men. In Saint Lucia, the prevalence is estimated to be less than 1 per cent in the general population, with the number of new infections appearing to be stable over the past five years.

Saint Lucia welcomes this High-level Meeting as an opportunity to discuss the best practices and efforts among Member States and to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress we have achieved so far. Our national response has recorded many gains in the past 10 years, including free voluntary counselling and testing, a reduction in the number of AIDS-related deaths as a result of Government-provided antiretroviral treatment, a reduction in mother-to-child transmission, with zero new cases reported since 2006, and a decline in the number of new reported cases of HIV/AIDS over the past five years.

While that progress is encouraging, Saint Lucia continues to face many challenges in providing a comprehensive response to the epidemic. We are grateful for technical support from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organization (WHO), which have helped us to identify the need for a two-phase approach in the future. Phase one is the commitment to address the disease through science- and evidence-based approaches, enabling us to better identify the national and regional character of the transmission of HIV/AIDS in our region in order to develop a targeted response. Phase two will entail an increase in testing, treatment and prevention, recognizing that these three components are all aspects of treatment and prevention and are most effective when provided together.

Saint Lucia, in consultation with UNAIDS, recognizes the need to develop an evidence-based response to the disease that addresses the situation that we are facing currently. An evidenced-based prevention and treatment programme enables a coordinated effort throughout the country in prioritizing resources and actions to groups that are most at risk and most vulnerable. We are committed to working with partners and experts to improve our understanding of the particular nature of the disease in Saint Lucia and to develop a response tied to our local experience and situation.

This shift from a generalized approach to a concentrated one, which prioritizes and addresses those most at risk, will enable us to provide a more sustainable response that can be implemented at the country level. Such a response is critical, as Saint Lucia is currently facing a transition in which a number of significant external grants and partnerships are coming to an end. Consequently, it is imperative that our resources and efforts be deployed in the most effective manner possible to reach those who are most at risk.

Based on the evidence we have about the spread of the disease, our national strategic plan, which was drafted with the technical support of UNAIDS and the WHO, has identified major sectors of the population that are most at risk, namely, in order of priority, men who have sex with men and sex workers. Another priority will be to ensure that we eliminate mother-to-child transmission.

In addition, we have identified young people, and girls in particular, as a group that is vulnerable given current behaviours and knowledge about the spread of HIV. Education for young people will include an emphasis on the risks associated with early sexual debut and encouraging the postponement of sexual debut for both boys and girls. However, the biological vulnerability of girls will be emphasized, as the fact that girls are 50 per cent more vulnerable to sexually transmitted infections and HIV must be made clear to all.

Given the nature of the disease in Saint Lucia and following our experiences over the past many years of intervention, we are committed to addressing diseases in the following way.

In order to steward scarce resources and enable the best care and treatment to be provided to those who are most at risk, we will focus efforts on treating the epidemic in a concentrated fashion, which will focus on linking testing to care. Voluntary confidential testing is a critical factor in reducing the transmission of disease and identifying those who require care and support. Testing and care must be linked in order to ensure that the social and human support required by those who have tested positive for HIV and AIDS is provided. Integrated care has been identified as one of the priorities in securing better treatment going forward.

Good care is part of prevention. Humane programmes that are person-centred and provide social support and additional care for those who are marginalized and vulnerable are essential to treating the whole person. In addition to care and treatment programmes, prevention programmes that address high risk groups as well as the generalized population, and which provide strong messages regarding the dangers of concurrency, will be developed. In this context, the promotion and support of healthy sexual behaviour is essential. An emphasis on programmes to achieve this objective will be continued, building upon existing health and family life education programmes in schools towards the development of greater community and civic involvement, in support of young people in particular, in the adoption of healthy behaviours.

Saint Lucia reaffirms its commitment to combating this disease by ensuring that the resources we have are used most effectively. We continue to prioritize addressing high-risk communities and providing them with the support and resources they require, while also emphasizing healthy sexual behaviours and ensuring that an emphasis on prevention is clearly provided to young people who comprise the high-risk groups, as well as all individuals, groups and communities in Saint Lucia at large.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Rudyart Spencer, Minister of Health of Jamaica.

Mr. Spencer (Jamaica): My delegation joins others in congratulating you, Mr. President, on presiding over this important High-level Meeting. I also commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his initiative in convening this Meeting to review global progress achieved on our earlier commitments with regard to HIV and AIDS.

At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by The Honourable Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, who spoke on behalf of the Caribbean Community. Allow me, however, to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Jamaica acknowledges the considerable investment that the international community, led by the United Nations, has made in the fight against HIV and AIDS for many decades. Indeed, it is that global support that has allowed countries such as Jamaica to make a difference in the lives of many persons who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. The progress that has been made in Jamaica is noteworthy.

In 2009, there was an 18 per cent decline over 2006 in the number of persons reported with advanced cases of HIV/AIDS. AIDS deaths have also declined significantly, from 665 in 2004 to 378 in 2009. Paediatric AIDS deaths also declined by 19 per cent, from 32 cases in 2008 to 26 cases in 2009. The expansion of HIV testing in the public sector has resulted in treatment coverage for about 84 per cent of pregnant women and 98 per cent of babies delivered in the public sector. Early testing has resulted in the timely provision of antiretroviral treatment, leading to reduced mother-to-child transmission, which now stands at less than 5 per cent. Despite those advances, Jamaica faces challenges relating to inadequate human resources in order to effectively scale up testing, treatment and support services.

Tight fiscal constraints, which are not unique to Jamaica, undermine the Government's commitment to advance effective HIV and AIDS strategies in any significant way. The country will need the continued consistent support of the donor community, not just to maintain the gains that we have made but to make great leaps forward in the achievement of various international targets relating to HIV/AIDS, in particular for persons living with the disease — especially those who are marginalized, including our

most at risk populations, such as men who have sex with men, sex workers and crack cocaine users.

Jamaica looks forward to the outcomes of these deliberations and joins the rest of the world in commending the stewardship and leadership of the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Henry Madzorera, Minister for Health and Child Welfare of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Madzorera (Zimbabwe): Zimbabwe is pleased to participate in this High-level Meeting that seeks, among other things, to craft a way forward in the global response to the HIV and AIDS epidemic. To that end, I thank the Secretariat for its reports that provide the basis for our deliberations.

Allow me to align myself with the statement made by The Honourable Richard Kamwi, Minister of Health and Social Services of Namibia, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

Pursuant to our universal access commitments, over the years Zimbabwe has scaled up its national response to HIV and AIDS while being guided by specific targets and indicators of the declaration on universal access, namely, the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262).

In that regard, Zimbabwe's HIV prevalence has continued to decline, from a high of over 29 per cent in 1999 to the current 13.7 per cent. That decline has also been consistent with the decline in the incidence of HIV. The declines in both areas have been underpinned, among other things, by expanded access to HIV prevention services, including on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, as well as the provision of male and female condoms, HIV testing and counselling and awareness-raising campaigns. We recently added male circumcision to our HIV prevention programmes, following compelling evidence that if it is offered to many men and taken up appropriately, the practice offers potential benefits in HIV prevention.

Following the adoption of the universal access Declaration, in 2006 Zimbabwe was perhaps among the first in the world to develop and implement an evidence-based behaviour-change strategy whose primary outcome has been the reduction of new HIV cases. Evidence has already been noted that the behaviour-change strategy has contributed to an increased demand for, and uptake of, HIV prevention services.

To enhance the utilization of testing and counselling services as a gateway to treatment and care, Zimbabwe introduced provider-initiated testing and counselling services in all health institutions. This proactive service has made our testing and counselling services user-friendly and robust by enhancing services already provided under voluntary testing and counselling services.

Despite the funding challenges, Zimbabwe has also recorded significant progress in the provision of treatment and care services. By the end of 2010, Zimbabwe had achieved 77 per cent coverage towards our universal access target, wherein 350,000 of an estimated 593,000 individuals who required antiretroviral therapy were accessing antiretrovirals.

Although the achievement of universal access in treatment and care was well within reach in 2010, Zimbabwe took a deliberate step to ensure that people needing treatment could access drugs when they still looked and felt healthy and were likely able to respond well to treatment. In that regard Zimbabwe adopted the World Health Organization's newly revised treatment guidelines, raising the threshold for the initiation of treatment to a CD4 cell count of 350, up from 200. Based on that adjustment, the demand for treatment services immediately rose, with 593,000 clients now needing treatment.

In pursuit of universal access targets, Zimbabwe has expanded and decentralized treatment services to all districts as well as various rural health centres, opening new antiretroviral therapy sites at all levels. Regular outreach campaigns penetrating into villages and farming and mining communities have resulted in an increased uptake of treatment services, as well as the reduction of stigma and discrimination.

Against the backdrop of increased external support in this area, Zimbabwe has also recorded a significant increase in the number of children accessing antiretroviral drugs. The number of children on treatment, which is 10 per cent of the total population, has doubled in the past two years. Efforts are in place to ensure that this service is expanded so that many more children can access treatment. Part of the effort includes the creation of an enabling environment wherein the bottlenecks that result in access challenges are eliminated. The increase in the number of children

accessing treatment and care services has benefited from a deliberate effort by Zimbabwe to expand the coverage of services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, the introduction of early infant diagnosis and the mobilization of communities to participate in prevention services.

In pursuit of universal access, Zimbabwe has also strengthened collaborative tuberculosis/HIV interventions, whose impact has already been immense in the scaling up of treatment and care services. As part of our commitment to, and pursuit of, universal access, Zimbabwe has now switched to the use of more efficacious regimens and is slowly phasing out certain old triple-dose regimens whose efficacy was comparatively lower.

I would like to salute our partners for the assistance they have rendered Zimbabwe in the area of treatment and care. To mention but a few, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the HIV/AIDS Expanded Support Programme, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, the Clinton Health Action Initiative and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have played central roles in enabling Zimbabwe to expand access to treatment and care services.

Zimbabwe recognizes that the achievement of universal access targets requires an adequately enabling environment. As such, we have created structures for proper coordination and implementation in a multisectoral approach. Under that approach, our Government enacted relevant legislation for the creation of the National AIDS Council and the National AIDS Trust Fund. These institutional arrangements are supported by various sectoral policies that seek to promote the achievement of universal access targets. Indeed, the effectiveness of these institutional arrangements has been recognized both regionally and internationally and has been subject to study and analysis as a best practice by many.

Spurred by improvements in the performance of the economy since the adoption of a multi-currency regime, our home-grown AIDS levy has already started to claim its place in our financing strategy and is already playing a significant role. Our pursuit of universal access is set to tremendously benefit from Zimbabwe's recently developed results-based HIV and AIDS strategic plan.

Let me conclude by saying that there have been many challenges in pursuing the universal access targets. Despite those challenges, we are hopeful that Zimbabwe will scale up interventions and eventually achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment and care in the shortest possible time.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Georges Moyen, Minister for Health and Population of the Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Moyen (Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): In taking the floor here today during this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, I would like first of all to convey to the General Assembly the warm greetings of the President of the Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou Nguesso. He has authorized me to express the firm commitment of the Congolese Government to support in every possible way the actions set out in the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262). I would therefore like first to speak about the progress that the Congo has made in combating AIDS. Thereafter, I shall share with the Assembly the concerns and challenges that have emerged in the response. I shall conclude by referring to the prospects for new impetus in our work.

In an effort to take concrete steps to fulfil the commitments undertaken by the Congo, in July 2003 our President took the initiative to establish an institutional framework to serve as a guide for advocacy and coordination. Two subsequent strategic frameworks were also created, enabling us to structure our national response and to take into consideration national and international concerns. Accordingly, we have taken the following steps to achieve universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for those living with HIV, as well as to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We provide free HIV screening, lab tests and antiretroviral drugs. We have also adopted a judicial framework and increased budget allocations to finance efforts to combat AIDS.

All these steps have been implemented on the ground through preventive actions and by addressing HIV and sexually transmitted diseases and HIV. The prevalence of HIV declined from 4.1 per cent in 2003 to 3.2 per cent in 2009. The number of patients receiving antiretroviral therapy increased fourfold in

five years — from 4,000 in 2006 to 16,000 today, including 1,000 children.

While we welcome the results so far, there are still other challenges to overcome. We need a sustainable ongoing partnership to fund prevention programmes and global treatment programmes. I must express here our appreciation for all the international initiatives that have been adopted, for Africa in general as well as for the Congo in particular, to finance the fight against HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. I should also express our gratitude to the networks of people living with HIV and other civil society organizations, whose commitment to supporting State institutions deserves every possible encouragement.

The Congo is nonetheless still concerned by the feminization of the epidemic, by the particular vulnerability of indigenous peoples to HIV and by the issue of TB/HIV co-infection. For those reasons, the measures we take as a country will focus especially on eliminating mother-to-child transmission, improving treatment for TB/HIV co-infection, increasing access to services for indigenous people and affirming female leadership — all in the service of universal access.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Paijit Warachit, Permanent Secretary for Public Health of Thailand.

Mr. Warachit (Thailand): It is time yet again for us, the nations of the world, to unite for universal access. For Thailand, this goal and principle are the foundations of our national HIV/AIDS response. We have struggled hard to reach this goal. Now we are committed to moving beyond it to zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

Since the High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS in 2006 (A/60/PV.86), Thailand has made substantial progress in the prevention of HIV infection among the general population and of mother-to-child transmission. Current coverage includes nearly 97 per cent of women in need. Access to HIV treatment, care and support is now a reality for nearly 80 per cent of all in need. In addition, some services have been expanded to non-nationals and people in remote areas, which include migrant workers and ethnic minorities. Government and civil society enjoy a close and effective partnership on both prevention and care, while the private sector continues to play an active part. Meanwhile, we are striving in a comprehensive manner to eliminate stigma and discrimination.

In Thailand, we project that, over the next five years, certain key affected populations will account for more than 90 per cent of new infections. These include men having sex with men, sex workers, injecting drug users and partners in a relationship in which one of them is unknowingly or knowingly HIV positive. On our course to the three zeroes, we are working not only to optimize and consolidate what Thailand has done well; we must also emphasize innovation and change in focusing on prevention. We must also address the legal, social and environmental factors that hinder access to prevention and care services, as well as the factors that fuel stigma and discrimination.

In order to achieve zero new infections, we will focus on areas where most infections occur in terms of specific groups and geographic areas. For Thailand, a rights-based and gender-sensitive approach is integral to providing high quality prevention services to all key populations.

In order to rapidly scale up our prevention response, we have decided to pilot innovative financing models, including a country prevention fund. We also aim to strengthen local ownership, leadership and capacity to manage HIV/AIDS response. This, we hope, will be key to our success in getting to zero.

Thailand recognizes that HIV is more than a health challenge. That is why it is necessary to maximize synergies from Government and non-Government services in an integrated and cohesive manner. We also see the need to continue to improve coordination and cooperation beyond our borders. Thailand is currently providing HIV prevention, treatment and care for migrant workers from neighbouring countries with a substantial contribution from the Global Fund. We must now work harder and more closely with our fellow member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to prepare for the ASEAN community that will emerge by 2015.

Last, but certainly not least, Thailand has scaled up treatment programmes that rely mostly on domestic funding and very little on international sources. In this respect, trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) flexibilities have been and will continue to be an essential and vital contributing factor in our efforts to achieve universal access. From our

experience, it has become clear that TRIPS flexibilities help to ensure that people living with HIV around the world have access to care and treatment. This understanding is crucial if the international community is to fully achieve the goals of zero AIDS-related deaths and zero new infections. As both the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and our Political Declaration (resolution 60/262) have spelled out, the international community as a whole must reach the global target of 15 million people living with HIV on antiretroviral treatment by 2015 if we are to be successful in our global response to HIV and AIDS.

Thailand reaffirms its continuing commitment to working closely with all nations to end the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Our long struggle has taught us many lessons that we would be pleased to share with others. Having set our sights on the three zeroes, we are now ready to walk the path ahead together with the international community to achieve the targets we have set not only for ourselves but for all people, no matter who or where they are.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.

United Nations A/65/PV.92

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Thursday, 9 June 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

High-level meeting on the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/797)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Gervais Rufyikiri, Second Vice-President of Burundi.

Mr. Rufyikiri (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me convey the greetings of His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, who asked me in particular to congratulate you, Sir, on having convened this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a threat to the entire world that every day claims new victims and deprives countries of the life force they need for socio-economic development. Burundi has carefully followed the various phases and the subregional and regional meetings leading up to and preparing for this major global event. We have noted with great satisfaction the broad-based determination to put an end to HIV and AIDS and the harm they cause.

Burundi welcomes the future envisioned by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) through the objective of zero new infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero discrimination. My country, Burundi, endorses this vision. Likewise, in recognition of the fact that sexual violence makes a non-negligible contribution to the spread of HIV, Burundi will make provisions to further integrate the fight against sexual violence into the framework of its national programme for fighting AIDS and its national reproductive health programme, in line with recommendations by the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNAIDS.

Since the twenty-sixth special session held here in New York in June 2001, Burundi, despite the protracted political crisis that leaves us today in a post-conflict situation, has achieved progress in its response to the scourge of AIDS. We have established a multisectoral, decentralized institutional framework, with effective participation by the highest authorities. We have implemented activities under a single unified strategic plan, which has been evaluated at regular periods. We have also established a single monitoring and evaluation system.

Thus, in terms of universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and support, Burundi increased the number of testing centres from 20 in 2001 to 40 in 2010; of people tested from 10,000 in 2001 to 430,000 in 2010; of centres for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission from two in 2001 to 110 in 2010; of women following the mother-to-child transmission prevention protocol from 100 in 2001 to 2,600 in 2010;

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of centres for people living with HIV/AIDS from one in 2001 to 90 in 2010; people living with HIV/AIDS under antiretroviral treatment from 600 in 2001 to 22,000 in 2010; and of orphans and other vulnerable children provided with comprehensive support from fewer than 2,500 in 2001 to 70,000 in 2010. These figures, which are broadly representative and show the progress made by my country, were made possible by the combined efforts of the Government of Burundi and our development partners, as well as actors on the ground from the public, non-governmental and private sectors, committed to tackling the scourge of AIDS head on.

This meeting provides a timely opportunity to look to the future, set realistic goals for 2021 and pave the way to achieving them. Burundi intends to test approximately 1.9 million by 2015, which represents 60 per cent coverage. With its scale-up plan, our country will place approximately 14,000 HIV-positive pregnant mothers under the mother-to-child transmission prevention protocol — a coverage rate of 85 per cent. We also intend to provide antiretroviral treatment to 55,000 people — a coverage rate of 80 per cent.

While it is clear that Burundi is devoting immense efforts to fighting HIV/AIDS, it is also facing immense challenges that we must absolutely overcome. The major challenges arise from the scarcity of human resources in terms of numbers and qualifications, the lack of equipment and material in health care facilities, and the lack of health infrastructure.

While we thank all the partners who have stood at Burundi's side in supporting our efforts, both technically and financially, we also call on other potential partners to continue to support Burundi in its fight against HIV/AIDS. For its part, the Government of Burundi will pursue its efforts by making an annual provision in its budget for the fight against AIDS, in addition to tax and customs duty exemptions for goods and equipment intended for this use.

I cherish the hope that the efforts of the international community will be crowned with success and the world freed from HIV and AIDS.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now hear an address by Her Excellency Ms. Teima Onorio, Vice-President of the Republic of Kiribati.

Ms. Onorio (Kiribati): I bring to the Assembly warm greetings from my President, His Excellency Mr. Anote Tong, my Government and the people of the Republic of Kiribati. I am indeed grateful for this opportunity to be able to present a statement on the issue of HIV in Kiribati.

Kiribati is categorized as a low-HIV-prevalence country. However, recent sexually transmitted infection prevalence surveys conducted among transactional sex workers, locally known as "amen matawa", seafarers, policemen and antenatal care mothers have shown a high prevalence of such infections. This suggests that there are high-risk behaviours within these population groups that make them extremely vulnerable to HIV infection when and if it is introduced. HIV would rapidly increase in this group and would probably then spread to the general population. The greater concern is that Kiribati has a predominantly young population practicing high-risk behaviours, as was revealed by a recent survey conducted among young people.

Kiribati, along with other countries in the Western Pacific region, is likely to be highly vulnerable to an epidemic of HIV if appropriate actions are not taken to address the threat of the rising prevalence of sexually transmitted infections among vulnerable groups: transactional sex workers, seafarers, policemen and expectant mothers. To address that concern, the Government responded by increasing the number of voluntary confidential counselling and testing sites from three in 2009 to eight in 2010. Beside services offered during normal working hours, these sites also offer after-hours services to accommodate the needs of these specific high-risk groups. The Government is also committed to increasing voluntary confidential counselling and testing services in the outer islands in order to increase testing for sexually transmitted infections and hence treatment there.

The Government is responding to the issue of the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV by advocating the prevention of parent-to-child transmission instead. In 2010, a new prevention-of-parent-to-child-transmission clinic, funded by UNICEF, was opened. It offers services for expectant mothers and encourages husbands to access the service, since both partners — not just the mother — have a key role in preventing their children from acquiring HIV.

Kiribati, with a population of 100,000 people, has 54 confirmed HIV cases, 63 per cent of whom are males and 37 per cent females. Twenty-four people have died from AIDS-related causes. Although the number of cases seems small, the worrying part is the small size of our population, which clearly indicates that Kiribati's HIV situation is the tip of the iceberg. Not all who are infected with HIV are accessing prevention, treatment, care and support. Stigma and discrimination remain the major obstacles discouraging the establishment of an enabling environment, and thus people infected with HIV tend to remain hidden or stay underground. Their chances of transmitting HIV infection to the larger community are therefore high.

Creating an enabling environment that avoids or prevents prejudice, stigma, discrimination and criminalization remains the major challenge to Kiribati's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Kiribati Government believes in a multisectoral approach to the epidemic and will continue to support its 30-member HIV/AIDS task force, now known as the Kiribati Country Coordinating Mechanism. Its membership is drawn from both Government and civil society.

We are also committed to strengthening our legal systems and social environment as an effective measure for preventing HIV. We therefore strongly support the statement made by the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), Michel Sidibé, to the effect that the AIDS response must be taken out of isolation; it must become a catalyst for other national programmes. It must not be dealt with as a separate entity; rather, HIV, legal systems, the social environment and economic development should be part and parcel of a complete package when formulating an intervention.

My Government is working steadily to transform the community's perception into a more caring and supportive one by supporting our human rights and workplace policy trainees in working with the Pacific Islands AIDS Foundation (PIAF), our local lawyers and our focal person from the Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) to review and enforce current legislation for people living with HIV and other vulnerable and marginalized groups in the community, as well as to draft a bill for the Cabinet to be used for consultation with community members. This should help change the community's perception of people living with AIDS and other vulnerable, marginalized groups. It is also hoped that those already infected with the virus will feel secure enough to come forward for health support services and treatment and to assist in implementation strategies to halt the spread of HIV in Kiribati.

On behalf of my Government, please allow me to convey to all present that Kiribati is in full support of and ready to adopt a new declaration that will reaffirm current commitments, and to commit to actions to guide and sustain the global AIDS response. It is also my pleasure today to acknowledge the ongoing support of our international implementing partners, which include UNAIDS, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Humanitarian Response Fund, UNICEF, PIAF, Pacific Counselling and Social Services, RRRT and the World Health Organization. The ongoing financial and technical support that they have rendered Kiribati has certainly been of great assistance and will continue to strengthen and sustain our response to HIV/AIDS in the years to come.

In closing, let me wish all our traditional blessings of health, peace and prosperity to all.

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to remind delegations that the time limit is five minutes per speaker, and that the time elapsed is indicated on the monitor next to the rostrum. I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Victor Makwenge Kaput, Minister of Health of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Makwenge Kaput (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey the greetings of my President, His Excellency Mr. Joseph Kabila Kabange, who was not able to travel to this High-level Meeting for reasons of State and has entrusted me to convey the following message.

It is my great honour and genuine pleasure to take the floor here to present to the Assembly the point of view of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the issue of HIV/AIDS in the specific context of our country, which for several years has been beset by insecurity of all kinds. I take this opportunity to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the opportunity to participate in this important High-level Meeting on HIV. I would also like to thank the Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS, Mr. Michel Sidibé, for the interest he has shown in me by including me in the side events of this meeting.

As the Assembly is aware, since the appearance in 1983 of this terrible pandemic, my country has not hesitated to remain open to international cooperation so as to better understand the disease and thus contribute to organizing the global response to AIDS. This Meeting provides an opportunity for me to reiterate the Congolese people's deep gratitude to the countries, international organizations and various mechanisms and initiatives for all the assistance they have continued to extend to us in this struggle.

In my country, several measures have been taken to address the numerous problems caused by the epidemic. While there has been progress in controlling the epidemic and in protecting individuals living with HIV, a great deal remains to be done. According to the most recent data in my country, the HIV epidemic is a generalized one, with an HIV prevalence of 3.7 per cent for pregnant women and 3.03 per cent for the general population. It is characterized by a trend towards feminization and is increasingly affecting youth and the rural population. It is also concentrated along the Congo River in mining areas, in post-conflict areas and in border areas.

For 2011, the estimated number of affected individuals is approximately 1,200,000; the number of people newly infected totals 128,256, of whom 71,170 are women. In addition, a number of other challenges linked to achieving the Millennium Development Goals are of ongoing concern to us.

First, we are concerned about the health status of both mothers and children, as the rate of maternal and neonatal mortality remains high. We are also focusing on the fact that the large majority of children born to HIV-positive mothers have not received any protection from the virus, and the fact that more than 80 per cent of HIV-infected persons do not yet have access to appropriate, high-quality treatment.

However, my Government and I remain personally committed to the various declarations and resolutions taken at the international level to combat HIV/AIDS. In my country, I personally launched an initiative entitled "A generation without AIDS", which is an integral part of the global vision of zero infections. Once again I appeal for international cooperation to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a country that bears one of the heaviest AIDS-related burdens in Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hanno Pevkur, Social Minister of Estonia.

Mr. Pevkur (Estonia): First, I would like to associate myself with the statement that will be made on behalf of the European Union and to offer the following comments on behalf of Estonia.

The world has known the significance of three letters — H, I and V — for 30 years already. We have witnessed how the response to these three letters has changed over the years — from fear and neglect to care, acceptance and a commitment to stop the spread of the virus. However, as the Secretary-General's report (A/65/797) shows, the epidemic is spreading faster than we are able to combat it. HIV is placing an increasing humanitarian and economic burden on all countries of the world.

Estonia is a country with a relatively high rate of HIV infection. To date, 7,850 people have been diagnosed with HIV, that is, 0.6 per cent of the population. Although the number of new cases has been decreasing over the past 10 years, last year there were 236 new cases per one million inhabitants. Our main risk group has been and still is injecting drug users. Access to drug-abuse treatment and rehabilitation and harm reduction and sexual health services is essential in order to prevent the further transmission of HIV among people who inject drugs, to their sexual partners and to the general population.

Furthermore, one of the main conclusions of the "HIV in the European Region — Unity and Diversity" conference, held in Tallinn in May 2011, was that scaling up harm reduction and substitution treatment among people who inject drugs was one of the keys to stopping the epidemic in Eastern Europe.

In recent years, an increasing number of young women have been infected through heterosexual contact. Therefore, as HIV affects mostly people in their productive and reproductive years, it should continue to be a high-level priority. Ensuring maternal, newborn and child health and preventing vertical transmission is our common goal, which must be achieved. Estonia firmly believes that the elimination of stigma and discrimination, the protection of the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, including those living with HIV/AIDS, is a cornerstone of healthier societies.

A strong political commitment is absolutely necessary in order to stop the spread of the virus and provide the best possible care for those who are infected. Estonia has devised a broad-based strategy aimed at achieving a sustainable reduction in the spread of HIV, with clear national targets to be achieved by 2015. The strategy, which is fully in line with the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2), unites the efforts of the governmental, municipal and non-governmental sectors in order to take effective actions.

Historically, our HIV and tuberculosis programmes have been vertical. But it is clear that sustainable health systems and ensuring a continuum of care for those affected by HIV are crucial. It is very important that our patients, including those from vulnerable groups, receive integrated services and a comprehensive package including prevention, treatment and care. HIV does not affect only one institution or organization; therefore, an effective response requires collaboration on the part of stakeholders and specialists from different fields and at different levels.

Dedicated intersectoral cooperation has allowed us to achieve the outstanding results we are reporting today. We have seen a decline in the number of new infections. This tells us that we are on the right path. We are committed to continuing our activities in the context of a response at all levels aimed at stopping the spread of the virus and providing quality care for all those who are infected.

We have gathered here from across the globe to express our support for the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. I believe that we all have the aim of fulfilling those recommendations to the best of our ability, for the health of our nations and of the whole of humanity. To that end, we need to work together, share our experiences and learn more from one another.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Stephen Lashley, Minister of Family, Culture and Sport of Barbados.

Mr. Lashley (Barbados): I bring you greetings from the Government and the people of Barbados. I hope that the report I will share today on our benchmarks of effectiveness within our national AIDS programme will add some value to the collective knowledge required for greater success in the global prevention and control of HIV.

Let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, and the Secretary-General on the foresight that was shown in convening this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

Following a successful World Bank first project, Barbados has started the execution of a second project with a systematic focus on universal access to care, treatment and support, reducing new infections, eliminating stigma and discrimination, and significantly reducing the number of AIDS-related deaths.

The achievements and progress of Barbados' national AIDS programme continue to get necessary support at the highest level. There are 18 Government ministries, over half of which have a functioning HIV core group, with each ministry having an annual action plan for HIV.

We have thus been putting in place the measures and frameworks necessary for achieving the goals set at the beginning of the second World Bank project. These goals include maintaining the percentage of HIV-positive pregnant women receiving a complete course of antiretroviral prophylaxis for prevention of mother-to-child transmission above 95 per cent; increasing the funds disbursed to civil society organizations under results-based agreements with the National HIV/AIDS Commission to facilitate the implementation of targeted programme interventions for key populations at higher risk during the second project; increasing the number of persons from key populations at higher risk who can access preventive services; and increasing the percentage of sex workers who report the use of condoms with their most recent client. Data collected from this second World Bank project will form the basis for our national strategic plan for 2013-2018.

As a collective of nations, we need as a matter of urgency to address the issue of lack of access to concessionary funding, which impacts Barbados and other developing countries as a result of our relatively high per capita income, fuelled in our case mainly by tourism, which itself has introduced other issues of vulnerability. This difficulty has the potential of reversing recent successes in the provision of access to vital but expensive HIV-combating drugs.

We in Barbados have also adopted a national bipartisan approach to the management and treatment of HIV, as evidenced by a joint declaration recently signed by our Prime Minister, The Honourable Freundel Stuart, and the Leader of the Opposition, The Right Honourable Owen Arthur. In this declaration, we affirm our commitment to the national HIV response through a multisectoral approach, as articulated in our national policy on HIV, our national strategic plan on HIV prevention and control 2008-2013, and the principles embedded in the design of our national HIV programming. We also recognize our shared space — geographical or otherwise — and shared responsibilities in reaching the universal access 2015 "zero" goals, and support the Caribbean Community position, as articulated through the Pan-Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS.

We also recognize the need for targeted attention in specific areas at the Barbados country level. We further acknowledge that while noteworthy strides have been made in HIV care and treatment, especially with respect to prevention of mother-to-child transmission and support of persons living with HIV, significant efforts still need to the made in relation to the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections. We also commit in that declaration to addressing HIV-related stigma and discrimination at all levels within our society.

We give full assurance that, as a country, we will continue appropriate programmatic action to promote HIV-relevant policies; enact supportive legislation; improve monitoring and evaluation for evidence-based programme planning; strengthen national surveillance systems; ramp up civil society organization partnerships for more targeted interventions, especially among key populations at higher risk; adopt rights-based approaches; and develop evidence-informed programmes that address factors that increase HIV-related vulnerabilities, including stigma and discrimination, gender inequality and abuse of children.

We commend this approach to the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Marie-Josée Jacobs, Minister of Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs of Luxembourg.

Ms. Jacobs (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Luxembourg fully associates itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

In the present context of economic austerity and of multiple challenges to our common sustainable development, the 2011 High-level Meeting provides a unique opportunity to take stock of the progress made in combating HIV/AIDS and to prompt the international community to do everything possible to eliminate the ongoing obstacles to the implementation of health and other services in order to ensure effective, equitable and sustainable responses in this important struggle against the disease.

Over the past 10 years, political and financial commitment in the struggle against HIV/AIDS has been strengthened, while the movement to combat this illness has continued to show its capacity to transform resources into specific results to the benefit of the persons affected.

Countries have indeed committed themselves to ensuring that all those who require it enjoy universal access to prevention, treatment and health care. Significant progress can be noted in this regard. The global prevalence of HIV/AIDS is falling, and never has the world so rallied to demand respect for the fundamental dignity and rights of every individual exposed to the virus or affected by it.

However, these significant and promising advances are being threatened. Stigmatization, discrimination and gender inequality continue to hinder efforts to guarantee universal access to HIV prevention and treatment and to therapy and support. Our Meeting provides a unique opportunity for the international community to move response programmes forward and to provide equitable treatment in all regions of the world.

Allow me to emphasize here the particular importance that Luxembourg attaches in this context to prevention, the strengthening of health systems and the equal access of all to basic health care, as well as to the fulfilment of the commitments undertaken by Governments regarding national and international resources for combating HIV/AIDS.

I cannot fail to thank the Secretary-General for the recommendations made in his report entitled "Uniting for universal access: towards zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related

deaths" of March 2011 (A/65/797). I welcome the fact that the political declaration to be adopted at the end of our Meeting firmly reaffirms the commitments made and announces actions to guide and support the global response to AIDS in the years to come.

No country has escaped the devastating effects of this global epidemic over the past 30 years. Today, we all agree in reaffirming that knowing one's epidemic means knowing one's response to it. The struggle against the epidemic entered a decisive phase. Bold decisions must be taken that will lead to a radical development in the struggle against AIDS in order to achieve the new objective of zero new HIV/AIDS infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. To that end, we must base our actions on a new political commitment to conducting more targeted, effective and long-term actions.

Luxembourg believes that the United Nations has a decisive role to play in coordinating, strengthening and assisting the struggle against HIV, in particular through the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Here, allow me to pay particular tribute to the commitment, enthusiasm and vision of its Executive Director, Michel Sidibé.

Health is among Luxembourg's major sectoral cooperation priorities. In 2010, Luxembourg's official development aid (ODA) reached 1.09 per cent of its gross domestic product, and 13.07 per cent of its bilateral ODA was devoted to health. A considerable amount of these resources have been devoted to programmes and projects that directly address the fight against HIV/AIDS and its co-infections, the strengthening of health systems, research and development of treatments, in particular antiretroviral treatment for children, or efforts to mobilize public opinion and education in favour of risk-free behaviour. In order to implement a joint dynamic, flexible and sustainable action, Luxembourg undertook to support the "aids2031" initiative, launched by UNAIDS in 2007 to develop a strategy to combat HIV up to 2031, to the tune of €5 million.

At the national level, a committee of experts has closely followed the development of the epidemic for more than 27 years, advising successive Governments on political decisions crucial to managing it in the wider public health context. A more detailed description of our national efforts can be found in the version of my statement that has been distributed in the Hall.

Luxembourg will continue to do its part to help countries to achieve universal access to HIV services and to reach zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths in order to move towards a generation living without HIV.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Dédé Ahoefa Ekoué, Minister in charge of Planning, Development and Management of the Territory of Togo.

Ms. Ekoué (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I am particularly honoured to convey the warm greetings of His Excellency Mr. Faure Essozimna Gnassingbé, President of the Republic of Togo, and of the Togolese Government and people on the occasion of this High-level Meeting. I would also like to express the heartfelt congratulations of the Togolese Government to the President and the Secretary-General for its successful organization.

In the first quarter of this year, the National Council to Fight AIDS, over which the Head of State himself presides, reviewed national interventions to assess their scope and to propose new measures. Although still facing difficulties to which I will refer later, we nevertheless have some grounds for satisfaction. Today, the HIV infection rate is half that of 2001. Likewise, the rate of new infections has fallen by the same proportion among young people. In three years, we have more than tripled the number of people treated with antiretroviral drugs.

Our country also recently endorsed a plan to extend services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission from 2011 to 2015. That plan will enable us to reduce the HIV transmission rate from 8 per cent in 2010 to 2 per cent in 2015. Togo's goal is to have a generation of young people free from AIDS by 2020.

Meeting the challenge of universal access means providing services for all. That is why my country, Togo, adopted a law that protects people living with HIV from discrimination and stigmatization, ensures respect for confidentiality and takes into account the rights of sex workers and detainees.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Togo believes that the issue of HIV should be seen as not only a public health, but also a development issue. That is why Togo is firmly committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Thus, the 2010 report of the Overseas Development Institute ranks Togo among the top 20 countries with absolute overall progress on the MDGs. Togo was able to make such progress thanks not only to national leadership and ownership, but also to international aid. We therefore take this opportunity to express our full satisfaction with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and to commend the assistance of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations family, bilateral partners and African regional and subregional organizations.

If we are to offer a more lasting and more effective response commensurate with the challenges and our joint goals, we will need ever greater human and financial resources. That is why Togo has already provided for long-term budgetary resources to fight AIDS. However, such resources must go hand in hand with significant international assistance if we are to achieve our goals for the period 2011-2015.

Ten years after the adoption of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2), there has been notable success at the international level. We owe that success to our resolute will to leave to posterity a more respectful world without AIDS that is richer for its differences. We also owe it to the leadership of UNAIDS, which has been able to rally the entire United Nations family, donors and Member States around the motto "Unite to overcome AIDS".

Now we must consolidate and significantly increase our achievements. We can fulfil that pledge only by mobilizing more resources to fight HIV/AIDS. We therefore appeal for appropriate funding for the Global Fund. Together, we can go even further and progress more rapidly towards a world with zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ba Housseinou Hamadi, Minister of Health of Mauritania.

Mr. Hamadi (Mauritania) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first to thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts to convene this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS, which is one of the major challenges of our time.

It has been 30 years since the first cases of HIV/AIDS were recognized and since that disease struck, with more than 25 million deaths and more than 30 million HIV-positive persons, despite our international community's increasing mobilization. We have passed through many stages in our understanding of the virus, prevention and treatment, and the social integration of the sick. Despite such efforts, our community still has many challenges to overcome.

Today, my country, Mauritania, whose first AIDS case was identified in 1987, has 14,000 HIV-positive persons, with 3,000 patients receiving antiretroviral treatment, representing an overall prevalence of 0.7 per cent. That prevalence rose from 0.2 per cent in 1990 to 0.7 per cent in 2004; since then, the rate has remained stable. Despite that moderate prevalence, my country's authorities remain vigilant in a very difficult environment, where 40 per cent of our population is under 14 years, with a similar poverty rate.

In that context, our country focuses on prevention, the free treatment of the sick, the development of programmes and their social integration. We also place priority on the importance of good governance to ensure universal access to treatment for all the sick.

Mauritania, a Muslim country, has adopted legal texts to protect the ill — notably law 42/2007 on the rights of patients — and developed a prevention policy involving opinion leaders, religious leaders and the imams of mosques in all-out awareness-raising campaigns aimed at prevention and fighting stigmatization and discrimination.

The efforts of our countries cannot be successful without the mobilization of the international community in providing greater financial support and continued research and innovation programmes. My country therefore expects meaningful results from this High-level Meeting. We unreservedly support the common African position forged in April at Windhoek, Namibia, by African health ministers. My country also underscores the importance of increasing official development assistance to help in the fight against poverty and underdevelopment and in improving health and education services.

I cannot conclude without underscoring our support for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which have done outstanding work, and urge the international community to mobilize further resources in support of these institutions. I also take this opportunity to thank all our development partners, non-governmental organizations and civil society institutions that have continued helping us on a daily basis in the fight against this scourge.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Celsius Waterberg, Minister of Public Health of Suriname.

Mr. Waterberg (Suriname): Please allow me to associate Suriname with the statements delivered respectively by the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis on behalf of the Caribbean Community and the Vice-Minister of Public Health of Paraguay on behalf of the Union of South American Nations.

I take this opportunity to commend the United Nations for having organized this High-level Meeting on the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262).

In Suriname, we have made important strides in a number of areas. After the first reported case of HIV in 1983, we saw a steady increase in the epidemic until 2006. Since 2007, our efforts have been rewarded by a notable decline in the number of newly registered HIV cases. According to the 2010 global report of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Suriname is among few countries in the Caribbean where the incidence of HIV infection has decreased by more than 25 per cent. We have also achieved a 10 per cent reduction in mortality rates since 2006.

The progress we have made is the result of the implementation of our national strategic plan on HIV, which includes the following elements: strengthened coordination and leadership through the establishment of a national multisectoral HIV council; the establishment of additional structures, such as the Centre of Excellence in HIV Treatment and Care, which provides leadership in quality of services and training in the revised treatment protocols; and the introduction of the combined prevention tool, which has proven effective in the HIV response. Unique among Caribbean countries, Suriname has implemented pilot projects that have been successful in mobilizing men for circumcision as an additional preventive measure. HIV and AIDS services have been integrated into regular health services. Suriname provides treatment and care through its decentralized primary health care centres. Our programme to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child is integrated into a national programme for mother and child health. In 2009, we adopted the Regional Initiative for Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV and Congenital Syphilis in Latin America and the Caribbean, which we expanded to include hepatitis B. People living with HIV are involved in programmes providing care and support. We share experiences and lessons learned and pursue technical collaboration with other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Despite the positive results I have mentioned, we still face a number of challenges, including harmful traditions and customs, misconceptions and adverse beliefs, language barriers in a multilingual society, and the vulnerability of small communities and individuals due to HIV-related stigma, gender inequalities and poverty.

The Republic of Suriname appreciates the financial and technical support received to date from the Global Fund and other donors, which have contributed to our significant success in combating the HIV and AIDS epidemic in Suriname. In order to maintain these achievements and to continue making progress in the integration of HIV and AIDS services into regular health services, the continued support of the international community, including donors, is required.

In closing, the resources provided by funding agencies are becoming scarcer, as has been mentioned by several speakers before me, yet we are committing ourselves to further national and international targets. That is why, in order to move forward to achieve the goal of universal access to comprehensive HIV prevention programmes, treatment, care and support, it is of utmost importance to mobilize resources and political will at the national, regional and global levels.

We look forward to the adoption of the political declaration at the conclusion of this Meeting, with concrete commitments from all stakeholders for an effective response to the HIV epidemic.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Andreas Loverdos, Minister of Health and Social Solidarity of Greece.

Mr. Loverdos (Greece): This year marks three decades of fighting AIDS. The emergence and rapid spread of the HIV disease in the early 1980s came as a real shock. It is no exaggeration to say that the new virus raised an alarm for our countries, the World Health Organization and the United Nations. The epidemic broadened the gap between the North and the South and between developed and developing countries. Moreover, within wealthy States, the distance separating the rich from the poor became larger. The cost of prevention and medical treatment, particularly for the countries most affected, was, and continues to be, excessive. The epidemic increased the risk of social stigma for entire groups of the population, such as men who have sex with men, drug addicts and people in need of transfusions. Basic human rights were being challenged and some offensive prejudices were being revived.

For the international community, this year's High-level Meeting on AIDS provides an excellent opportunity, not only to recall the great achievements of our common fight against the disease during past decades but also to remind us that the danger is not over. We have managed to get it under control thanks to our common efforts and the progress of science. However, we have not yet eliminated it, so there is no room for complacency.

Greece welcomes the ideas of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The goals he proposes are clear and ambitious, and we need such goals if we want to succeed. In cooperation with our European Union partners, we are willing to work hard in order to achieve those goals.

Efforts against AIDS in my country have led us to some remarkable results over the past years. Our basic objective was to ensure access to public health services. Currently, all people in need can receive medical and hospital treatment, even if they lack the means or are poor, uninsured or economic or illegal immigrants. Another of our priorities was to protect human rights and promote action against discrimination. Through campaigns in schools, the army, prisons and elsewhere and through blood-safety controls, we seek to strengthen prevention.

In line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General, we intend to reinforce those initiatives. Programmes for the free distribution of condoms and needle exchanges should be expanded. To that end, we work closely with vulnerable groups of the population, civil society and non-governmental organizations. Greece has contributed as a donor country to the Global Fund and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, and we consistently support the relevant initiatives of the European Union.

As we speak today, our main concern is the scourge of human trafficking. In my country we had a significant increase in recorded AIDS infections last year. Many of those infections were among women from sub-Saharan Africa who were brought to our country illegally and were forced to work as prostitutes. It is obvious that problems of this kind can be addressed only through closer international cooperation.

In Greece, about 6,000 patients are now in treatment. The financial crisis affecting my country requires us to invest our money in a more rational and efficient way. However, we are confident that we will succeed in this effort without lowering the level of protection and without losing people's confidence that they can rely on our public health system for their safety.

I am here at today's Meeting to declare the commitment of my country to remain in the vanguard of the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pablo Marin, Minister for Health of Belize.

Mr. Marin (Belize): We meet today, three decades after the first cases of a disease we now know as AIDS were first reported in June 1981, to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the 2006 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262).

Let me at the outset acknowledge the active presence of members of Belizean civil society as part of our delegation to this High-level Meeting.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/65/797). Indeed, many of the global trends are mirrored in the national experience of my own country: declining infection rates, an increase in access

to treatment, the increasing feminization of HIV and the fact that the 15 to 24 age group continues to be the main age group affected by new HIV infections.

My Government is fully aware of the deep impact of HIV/AIDS across social, economic and development spheres. We know now that that impact is magnified in a small, diverse population, which presents its own unique challenges. Nevertheless, my Government remains firm in its commitment to a national response that is sustained and effective.

Even though Belize has the highest prevalence rate of HIV in Central America and one of the highest in the Caribbean, much has been done, particularly in the latter part of the past decade. Our response has been immediate, targeted and dynamic and has included a multisectoral partnership, robust policies and international support.

At the end of 2010, there were an estimated 5,394 persons living with HIV and AIDS in Belize. But that year also marked a notable achievement, since for the second consecutive year there was a decrease in the total number of new HIV infections. Belize is one of the few countries to experience a 33 per cent decrease in the number of new infections. We are equally pleased to report that our mother-to-child transmission prevention coverage rate has stood at almost 95 per cent over the past three years, with the transmission rate now below 6 per cent. This continued success can be highlighted as a best practice in the Caribbean region. At the end of 2010, the total coverage for persons needing medical treatment was above 70 per cent — a clear demonstration of my Government's commitment to the scaling up of treatment and support services in order to reach the goal of complete universal access by 2015.

We must be innovative in the way we approach and address the ever-growing dynamics of this disease, especially in the current global financial and economic crisis. While developing countries such as ours must seek to adequately invest in documented cost-effective interventions and best practices and seize national ownership at all levels to maintain our successes and overcome challenges, the international community must also honour its commitments in order to be able to consolidate our collective achievements.

With the growing pandemic of non-communicable diseases presenting a new dimension to the challenges we face, it is imperative to devise an integrated and broader health-sector response to HIV. Vertical programming and donor-agency-driven programmes have proven largely unsustainable and of limited effect. HIV must now be seen in the context of a chronic disease, in the context of a broader multisectoral response and in a context free of stigma and discrimination — in essence, in the context of respect for human rights and the right to health. Sustainable health initiatives will only succeed if we take a strategic approach from the beginning, ensure country ownership and sustainability at all times and keep the individual at the centre of the process.

I therefore renew my Government's continued commitment to work towards attaining specific deliverables for achieving the agreed targets, including universal access, and in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Leao Talalelei Tuitama, Minister for Health of Samoa.

Mr. Tuitama (Samoa): Greetings from the Government and people of Samoa. At the outset, I wish to congratulate the President of the Assembly for having convened this very important Meeting at this critical juncture in the fight against HIV/AIDS. I would also like to commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/65/797), which contains important recommendations for achieving our ultimate goal of a world free of HIV and AIDS.

Samoa, like most Pacific islands, has faced the reality of an increasing number of HIV cases since the first case was detected in 1990. Although we consider ourselves a low-prevalence country, with a total of 22 HIV cases to date, we are nevertheless concerned about the high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections and its subsequent implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Samoa acknowledges with gratitude the support from the international community, in particular the Global Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, which have assisted us in achieving greater focus on improving health systems and moving towards a more inclusive approach to encompass all facets of sexual and reproductive health.

More broadly, Samoa has invested in a sector-wide approach programme for its health sector. In that

regard, we extend our appreciation to the Governments of New Zealand and Australia, which have been working collaboratively with the World Bank to achieve clear and concise national health outcomes and to reflect the Millennium Development Goals within international, regional and national strategies, in particular with regards to my Government's priority of including health in its strategy for Samoa's development for the period 2008 to 2012.

The Samoan Government is taking the lead in advocating for greater health consciousness among its people — for example, by establishing the Samoan parliamentarian advocacy group on healthy living. It highlights political commitment and support to ensure a confident and well-informed response to the continuing global health challenges, where HIV/AIDS remains at the forefront.

The high level of political commitment has resulted in a mandate for the establishment of our national AIDS coordinating council, along with a technical advisory committee, to mobilize concerted efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The work of the council has led to the development and endorsement of our national HIV/AIDS policy and plan of action for the period 2011 to 2016, which will guide the work of the health sector and of stakeholders in the conduct of effective interventions for HIV/AIDS as the way forward.

The member organizations of the technical advisory committee are engaged in funded activities, such as the refurbishment of voluntary counselling and confidential testing clinics in Samoa; capacity-building training programmes for health personnel on counselling, which includes case management of HIV and sexually transmitted infections and counselling and training for trainers for the health sector; continuous support and care for people living with HIV/AIDS through antiretroviral treatment therapy and counselling; continuous multimedia campaigns targeting youth in particular and the community at large; and the establishment of the women-in-leadership advocacy group on HIV/AIDS.

Samoa has also made progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through the development of sector policies and strategic frameworks to guide and facilitate multisectoral efforts in the management and control of HIV/AIDS in Samoa.

Samoa's HIV/AIDS response is supported by the Global Fund and the Pacific Regional Strategy Implementation Plan II response fund for sexually transmitted infections and HIV. These two funding mechanisms complement one another to support national activities on sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS.

While the Ministry of Health continues to make progress in its mandated roles, in collaboration with sector partners and the international community, in our battle against HIV/AIDS there is still a need to strengthen and effectively engage strategic partners outside of the health sector to break barriers in the context of social, cultural and religious beliefs.

In conclusion, despite all the progress made thus far, more work remains to be done. From Samoa's perspective, this can be achieved by improving communication and gender-power relations; overcoming traditional, cultural and religious barriers; upholding equity and maintaining respect for human rights; and strengthening health systems. These are the key areas that must be prioritized to ensure a more encompassing and engaged response.

Samoa remains committed, in the hope of being the first country to eradicate HIV/AIDS. With the assistance and support of our regional and international partners in terms of adequate resources, this is possible.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Geeganage Weerasinghe, Minister of Health of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Weerasinghe (Sri Lanka): Let me thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important High-level Meeting to carry out a timely comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262) at a critical time in the global response. My Government gives high priority to this issue in its national policy agenda.

Since the emergence of the human immunodeficiency virus in 1981, the HIV pandemic has continued to grow and has caused substantial social and economic impacts throughout the globe. We are happy to learn of the achievements that have been and

of the positive aspects of the global response, as noted by speakers in the opening meeting.

While Sri Lanka's vulnerability to this epidemic remains as high as that of other countries, we maintain a low prevalence of below 0.1 per cent among the adult population, which is termed a latent HIV epidemic. I wish to underline some of the major factors contributing to this success.

Sri Lanka's high level of literacy — over 90 per cent among both men and women — has served as a solid foundation for many of our social achievements. The country's universal, free, birth-to-death health care system has made considerable contributions to improving the overall health of the population. That has resulted in low infant and maternal mortality rates and has increased life expectancy at birth. In addition, Sri Lanka introduced a social marketing programme for condoms as far back as the early 1970s, which resulted in preventing the spread of sexually transmitted infections and HIV.

Sri Lanka introduced its campaign against venereal disease in 1952. Since then, the country has provided nearly six decades of effective sexually transmitted disease services by establishing a number of full- and part-time clinics countrywide. In order to face the emerging global epidemic of HIV, my country established a national sexually transmitted disease and AIDS control programme in 1985. The programme provides technical guidance for the national HIV/AIDS response in coordination with all relevant stakeholders.

In 1987, the Government made it mandatory for the national blood transfusion services to carry out HIV infection tests on donated blood, in addition to other measures such as the promotion of voluntary blood donor networks and the screening of risky donors.

The Government has been providing free antiretroviral therapy since 2004, which contributes to keeping the prevalence of HIV low. Although Sri Lanka has a low prevalence of HIV, there is significant potential for an expansion of the epidemic among concentrated groups. However, we still have a window of opportunity to mitigate even this potential by introducing coordinated and focused measures. In that context, my country has introduced specific prevention efforts among groups with high-risk behaviours, such as female sex workers and their clients, men who have sex with men, vulnerable youth in tourist areas and migrant employees. Although the level of injecting drug use in the country is insignificant, there are other types of drug users, who deserve a comprehensive package of HIV-prevention services.

Against that backdrop, Sri Lanka successfully formulated a proposal for the period 2011 to 2015 that includes the national response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic for round 9 of the Global Fund's call for proposals. The national response addresses the objectives of increasing the scale and quality of comprehensive interventions for the populations most at risk, providing care, treatment and support for people living with HIV and AIDS and generating and using strategic information. These three objectives will be achieved through 13 service-delivery areas, with the equal participation of governmental, non-governmental and civil society organizations, including community-based organizations.

First, we expect to map and reach the populations most at risk with effective prevention that leads to safer behaviour. Secondly, we plan to provide first- and second-line antiretroviral therapy for adults and children. Thirdly, we will endeavour to improve diagnostic facilities for sexually transmitted infections and HIV. Fourthly, we intend to increase our knowledge base by undertaking an integrated biological and behavioural surveillance programme and carrying out national estimations of the size of groups with high-risk behaviours in order to thoroughly understand the country's epidemic potential. Those are a few of the major activities in our national response. There are also provincial-level programmes to raise awareness of HIV that focus specifically on youth.

The establishment of an enabling environment remains a critical part of our interventions. This is an important dimension in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment services. It will be crucial for the wider international community to address this critical issue jointly and comprehensively. In this respect, we stand ready to share our national experiences with other developing countries.

We believe that Sri Lanka has real potential to further reduce its low prevalence and to achieve zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Habiba Zéhi Ben Romdhane, Minister of Public Health of Tunisia.

Ms. Ben Romdhane (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am honoured to participate in this High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, which is a historic event that reflects the remarkable solidarity of the peoples of the world.

First and foremost, I would like to pay tribute to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for all his tireless efforts in convening this meeting that underscores the entire world's recognition of the need to coordinate efforts in combating AIDS.

I would also like, at the outset, to refer with pride to the fact that this meeting comes at the same time as the Arab spring, which has been a driving force for solidarity among the peoples of the world in their determination to use all their energies to combat the inequalities that threaten the existence and well-being of humankind, be they political, economic or social. I would also like to pay tribute to the United Nations for its positive stand vis-à-vis the democratic transformation that Tunisia has experienced since 14 January. That solidarity was clearly in evidence during the last week of March, when the Secretary-General visited my country and saluted the efforts made by all Tunisians to fulfil their expectations on all fronts.

Tunisia is committed to working with the international community to combat AIDS and halt its spread. We are also committed to removing all political, social and economic obstacles hampering efforts to combat this disease, which continues to kill millions and to hinder development efforts. All of us must fully realize the importance of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which was adopted at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly (resolution S-26/2) and calls for the recognition and promotion of human rights in all their aspects. In addressing this pandemic, my country will work in cooperation with all stakeholders and civil society and private sector organizations alike to provide treatment for those who are vulnerable or infected.

On the basis of our modest experience in that regard since the first cases were discovered, Tunisia has been able to control HIV transmission by monitoring blood transfusions and by providing — without discrimination — free testing and comprehensive health care to all those living with HIV/AIDS, including antiretroviral treatment for those who need it. We have done this by setting up a special budget for our national programme to combat AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. We believe that, along with the implementation of national recommendations and international decisions as part of our national strategy, working in collaboration is a fundamental element in successfully combating HIV/AIDS.

However, we must overcome the obstacles hampering the achievement of these goals. We must ensure more coordinated international efforts by working together with civil society in order to reduce high-risk behaviours. We will take all the necessary steps in that regard while fully respecting the highest human rights principles.

Tunisia, a land of freedom and dignity, is committed to providing all means to protect vulnerable groups, such as women, youth and children. This meeting of the General Assembly provides an excellent opportunity for my country to underscore its concern for our youth in addressing all the potential health risks they may face. We are ready to ensure prevention at the level of primary health care, to provide treatment and to support people's behaviour without stigmatization or discrimination.

We pay tribute to the enormous ongoing effort being made by United Nations programmes to ensure the success of the comprehensive strategy to provide services to all. We would also like to emphasize the need for continuing technical and financial support to affected countries, including Tunisia, by providing additional funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Tunisia welcomes the draft declaration before us today (A/65/L.77). We are committed to helping to put an end to this pandemic by preventing more HIV infections and by ensuring that there is no discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS. In conclusion, I wish this meeting every success, for the benefit of all.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Douglas Slater, Minister of Foreign Trade and Consumer Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Mr. Slater (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) by Mr. Denzil Douglas, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines joins the international community in soberly reflecting on the achievements and challenges of the HIV/AIDS response over the past three decades. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the CARICOM region in general have experienced notable progress, such as a more than 25 per cent decrease in the incidence of HIV infections, while providing treatment and care for a significant percentage of persons infected and/or affected by HIV, thus resulting in a notable improvement in the quality of their lives. It is important to note that all this progress and positive achievements are occurring in the context of a hostile global economic and financial environment, which places severe stress on our already scarce resources.

Among the major challenges in the HIV/AIDS response is achieving the appropriate behavioural change necessary to ensure or to improve our efforts to reduce the transmission of HIV. Also, despite some progress, issues of the stigma and discrimination of people living with AIDS and other vulnerable groups remain an important challenge. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and indeed the region, must commit themselves to continuing to address those issues, taking into consideration the many and varied stakeholders in our societies. Multifaceted education initiatives and shared responsibility are key to sparking positive behavioural changes both among the wider society, which must squarely confront lingering issues of stigmatization, and within vulnerable groups, where individuals must continue to take even greater responsibility for actions that minimize the risks of exposure and transmission.

The response of our caregivers, together with our very strong political commitment, has placed us well on the way to an HIV-free generation. We are also making progress towards achieving zero mother-to-child transmission by 2015. However, that element of the response must be reinforced by a stronger emphasis on the general prevention of HIV transmission. As such, the international community must pursue and collectively champion a veritable prevention revolution, involving especially the energy of our youth.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is committed to continued investment of its limited resources to achieve universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. In consideration of the ongoing unfavourable conditions in the global economic environment, we must continue to find more efficient and sustainable ways of achieving those goals. That will also require the commitment and increased support of the various international partners. In that regard, we remind and encourage our partners to increase official development assistance (ODA) and to provide additional resources to the various funding agencies, especially the United Nations Global Fund. We also call for the exploration of innovative means to generate the necessary financing to step up our war against this scourge, while recognizing that such innovative financing will complement, but not replace, the need for donors to meet ODA commitments.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is heavily reliant on generic medications in leading our national assault against HIV/AIDS. The willingness of States not only to allow but also to champion the widest and most flexible distribution of all generic medications remains one of the standards by which the developing world will continue to judge their commitment to the global eradication of HIV/AIDS. Legal and political straw men are of little comfort to the millions of people who still cannot access medication, which remains too expensive despite the progress that we have made on pricing. Three decades into this struggle, no human being should be suffering and dying simply because the necessary medication has been priced out of their Government's reach.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believes that the response must at all times take a holistic approach to the many health challenges that confront us. We must always strive to promote sociological concepts, such as the human rights of citizens and the dignity of women and girls.

We believe that persons living with AIDS have the right, and certainly the responsibility, to be included and firmly involved in the response process. Reliable research data should be utilized to guide targeted interventions in populations that are the main drivers of the transmission. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reiterates its commitment to pursuing efforts to minimize HIV-related stigma and discrimination.

Like everyone in the Hall, I continue to hope for a vaccine to prevent new infections and, eventually, for

a cure for those living with HIV and AIDS. While we encourage scientists to continue their critical work for a cure, we, the representatives of the world's Governments, must acknowledge that, even today, we already possess the knowledge and the tools to stop, reduce and ultimately eliminate the spread of HIV and AIDS. With continued education, shared responsibility, access to medication and the necessary political will at all levels, we can collectively put an end to the days when the illness was considered a death sentence, while looking forward to a world without AIDS.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sabyrbek Djumabekov, Minister of Health of Kyrgyzstan.

Mr. Djumabekov (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): The fight against HIV/AIDS is one of the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted at the Millennium Summit, in 2000. Stopping the spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and its social and economic consequences are at the top of the list of priorities of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the area of the protection of the health of its people. The Republic is now in the third stage of its national programme in that respect, and its multisectoral approach includes all State structures.

Our country's central coordinating committee is an integral element in the efforts of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to combat HIV/AIDS. There have been major developments in that respect, and the country is now undertaking efforts under the second law on the combat against AIDS, which contains a number of amendments.

We also have received assistance in the fight against AIDS from the international community, which is working closely with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

As a result of the financial support provided by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, there has been a significant increase in the number of tests carried out and cases of HIV/AIDS detected. However, despite the efforts made, HIV is spreading at a fairly rapid rate in our country. From 2001 to 2010, the morbidity rate rose from 3 to 12 per 100,000, and the annual increase in cases for the same period on the whole has been approximately 30 per cent.

In our country, HIV/AIDS is for the most part concentrated within vulnerable groups of the population. A significant proportion — 65 per cent — of those who are infected are injecting drug users, and infections resulting from sexual transmission also account for a significant percentage.

In 2005, we strengthened our measures to prevent the spread of AIDS among vulnerable groups and among pregnant women. The norms of international law are the legal basis of Kyrgyz Republic policies on drugs and on HIV/AIDS, and we are also introducing changes to our policies. In 2002, the Kyrgyz Republic took steps, at an early stage, to introduce progressive measures aimed at preventing HIV infections among drug users and prisoners, including through methadone substitution and needle exchange, and this has led to a decrease in the infection rate. As a result of these programmes, there has also been a substantial increase in the use of antiretroviral therapy by drug users. There are now 48 needle-exchange centres in the country and 40 centres for methadone therapy, including within the prison system.

HIV continues to affect the most active age groups of our population. A total of 78 per cent of those affected are between the ages of 20 and 39. We must also note the feminization of the infection, as the percentage of women infected from 2001 to 2010 grew from 9 to 30 per cent. In addition, 93 per cent of all pregnant women are tested for HIV.

A great deal has been achieved since the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, but much remains to be done. The Kyrgyz Republic is a small country that is still in the process of its formation, and therefore success in preventing HIV is a prerequisite for its successful development.

We are convinced that with renewed political will, strong leadership and a firm resolve to make progress, joint efforts by the State, civil society and all countries of the world can put an end to the spread of HIV/AIDS and reverse the trend.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nelson Eduardo Soares Martins, Minister of Health of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Martins (Timor-Leste): It is an honour and a great privilege for me to attend this important event to represent my country as both Minister of Health and the President of the National Commission to combat

HIV/AIDS in one of the youngest countries in the world. My President, His Excellency José Ramos-Horta, regrets that, owing to other, similarly important matters, he has to miss such an important event, whose theme is close to his heart. He kindly requested me to represent our country in his stead.

Timor-Leste, which has just over a million inhabitants, became an independent nation in 2002. It is a country that has emerged from conflict and is facing the extremely difficult task of rebuilding the nation's health system with limited human capital and financial resources. This is exacerbated further by the challenge posed by its limited access to a basic package of health services.

The national HIV/AIDS programme in Timor-Leste began full implementation in 2005; the first national strategic plan was developed, covering the period 2006-2010. The National AIDS Commission was established, with overall responsibility for oversight of the national strategic plan on HIV and sexually transmitted infections. The programme did not receive significant funding until the successful proposal made in round 5 of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

From 2003 through 2010, a total of 2,002 cases of HIV were confirmed, including 15 children under the age of 5. Most new cases detected in 2010 were in persons aged from 25 to 44 years, 43 per cent being women, while women make up 46 per cent of the prevalence rate overall. As of December 2010, there were 39 people on antiretroviral treatment in our country, including three children. The role of our fellow country and friend, Brazil, in donating antiretroviral medicines to Timor-Leste to treat those patients was crucial in the early years, when the first cases were identified in Timor-Leste, back in 2003. I would sincerely like to take this opportunity to thank the Brazilian Government for its immediate response to support our country during such important times. Attention to HIV/AIDS was very limited then, and constrained resources were being directed towards building the foundations of our newly independent State.

The President returned to the Chair.

Although Timor-Leste remains a low-prevalence country, it is experiencing higher rates of HIV transmission than projected. Less than 1 per cent of the vulnerable populations have seropositive status. Many may find those numbers comparatively small, but high-risk behaviour among the high-risk population remains a challenge that requires immediate action. Besides, a large majority of Timor-Leste's population is young, with 60 per cent below the age of 24. Almost one third of our population is between 10 and 24 years of age and nearly 50 per cent of the country's population is either adolescent or young. As a result, combined efforts, coupled by a strong commitment from Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, were launched to develop our new national strategic plan on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections for the period 2011 to 2016.

Greater involvement by people living with HIV is critical to an ethical and effective national response to the HIV epidemic. In Timor-Leste, the HIV programme extends beyond just treatment, care and support to include prevention, legal and social justice issues and any aspect of activities addressing the HIV epidemic. Collaborative efforts by our President, the parliamentary women's working group, the Government, church organizations, the national youth council, the military, the police force and the non-governmental organization forum have been the driving force in combating the associated effects of HIV/AIDS and controlling the spread of the virus in the country.

A multisectoral approach is needed to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. The new strategic plan pays significant attention to several issues. The first is the establishment of an enabling environment in which issues related to HIV and sexually transmitted infections can be openly discussed through a coalition for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health.

Another issue is access to a basic service package including information on HIV and sexually transmitted infections through our country's integrated community health services approach. Emphasis is also placed on targeted prevention programmes for individuals with multiple partners, and on scaling up prevention, treatment and care services in districts along the border with Indonesia through cooperation mechanisms with the Indonesian Ministry of Health.

Other issues involve ensuring the universal provision of life skills education, achieving universal access to treatment for those who are infected, strengthening the capacity of the health system to respond to the increased need for treatment services

and strengthening community sector systems to enhance the quality of service delivery.

Timor-Leste fully supports the new agenda towards zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. Timor-Leste is a young country experiencing low prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS. I challenge the international community to continue to support such countries in their efforts to achieve that vision. Continued research and increased financial commitments from Government and donors are essential in sustaining efforts to fight HIV/AIDS.

We must act together as one global nation in order to protect the lives of our people and future generations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Hanif Hassan Ali Al Qassim, Minister of Health of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Al-Qassim (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of the people and Government of the United Arab Emirates, allow me to extend our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for having invited us to participate in this important meeting. I would also like to express our gratitude for the significant efforts made by the Secretary-General and United Nations specialized agencies to cope with the AIDS epidemic through international efforts and initiatives to fight side-by-side in countering this health challenge, which is a source of great concern to the international community and which threatens global health.

Despite the efforts made by the international community and various organizations since its emergence some 30 years ago, AIDS and the virus that causes it remain among the greatest health challenges facing the world today. This disease is the main cause of the deteriorating public health, social and humanitarian conditions in many countries around the world. It poses enormous economic obstacles and dangers, above all in least developed countries. This clearly demonstrates the need to address the problem through international efforts to achieve the objectives of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), which include ensuring universal access to treatment, preventing transmission and caring for those living with HIV/AIDS without any sort of discrimination.

All of us here are aware that United Nations statistics show that some 34 million people suffer from HIV and that, by 2010, the virus had claimed almost 25 million lives. More than 7,000 new infections occur each day, the majority of them among mothers and children. Those indicators clearly illustrate the critical need to pursue efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. We must step up our efforts as set out in the 2001 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262). In that regard, there is a need to provide assistance and support for least developed countries, which are the most vulnerable to the disease, including resources necessary to obtain medications and ensure appropriate prevention efforts and treatment and care for patients suffering from the virus.

HIV infections and AIDS are not a national health problem in our country. Nevertheless, we are convinced that we must pool all national and international efforts to confront this global challenge. We have therefore adopted health strategies that reflect our desire for international cooperation in coping with that challenge through serious and effective initiatives and international partnerships. We reiterate our commitment to the Dubai agreement, which was reached following the policy dialogue to address this problem in the Middle East and North Africa, by adopting an effective national strategy to combat the epidemic. We have assembled sufficient diversified resources to implement a national programme and generated political support so as to consult with all regions and agencies involved, in particular the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS, with a view to controlling the epidemic and ensuring that prevalence rates are minimal in other countries.

As far as national programmes are concerned, the United Arab Emirates has created several mechanisms to help to prevent this disease. We make use of voluntary blood donors for the local market, relying on major diagnostic tools to ensure that the disease cannot be transmitted through the blood supply. There have been no reported cases of HIV having been passed on through blood transfusions in my country.

We have also set up a programme for those who wish to get married in order to prevent infection, as well as national detection programmes to respond to the need for behavioural change to prevent this illness and to protect future generations from becoming infected. We are also reviewing our protocols and

legislation concerning medications and the provision of medicines to patients.

The report prepared by the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Health and UNAIDS pursuant to the special session of the General Assembly, which was adopted in 2010, reflects the situation of AIDS in our country, in particular regarding the care provided to seropositive individuals. The report shows that there is an effective partnership between the Ministry of Health and all of the other institutions in our country, especially with regard to UNAIDS, the WHO and UNICEF. In particular, the report refers to efforts aimed at preventing the transmission of the HIV virus and providing care for those who are infected, specifically through the adoption of decree No. 29 in 2010, based on our conviction that there is a need to protect human rights and dignity free from any discrimination or stigmatization linked to infection status or any other reason.

Finally, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the United Arab Emirates to participate seriously in all of the efforts being undertaken to cope with the epidemic and to implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations. I wish every success to all communities currently working to carry out national efforts to combat this epidemic.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Ms. Vanda Pignato, Minister of Social Inclusion of El Salvador.

Ms. Pignato (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, allow me, on behalf of the Government of El Salvador, to express to you our most sincere thanks for your initiative to convene this High-level Meeting of the General Assembly to broadly and comprehensively assess the progress achieved in the implementation of the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and the Political Declaration adopted in 2006 (resolution 60/262). We would also like to reiterate our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his efforts in preparing for this important meeting.

For the Government of El Salvador, combating HIV/AIDS while focusing on human rights is an ongoing commitment. Allow me to refer to some recent developments.

Since 1 June 2009, the date on which President Mauricio Funes Cartagena assumed the presidency of our country, the Government of El Salvador has lived up to its commitment to involve the entire population — without any distinction with regard to age, race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity — in devising and implementing public policies on social integration. It is important to point out that, after many years of calls for legal recognition by various civil society organizations — in particular those representing vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV/AIDS, men who have sex with men and sex workers — those groups have attained recognition under the current Government. Likewise, an executive decree has been promulgated against discrimination in the civil service for reasons of sexual orientation or gender identity, which is emblematic of the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

We have also established a social integration secretariat, over which I have the honour to preside, that includes a dedicated office for addressing and raising the profile of sexual diversity. Moreover, we have set up a special HIV unit in the office of the prosecutor for the defence of human rights that is charged with ensuring compliance with and protecting the rights of people living with HIV.

In December 2005, the World Health Organization and UNICEF issued a call to action for the ultimate elimination of the transmission of HIV and syphilis in low- and middle-income countries, which included a strategy aimed at improving health care services in these countries. El Salvador has been a pioneer in the implementation of that strategy, as evidenced by our 88 per cent reduction in the number of cases of children born with HIV; the increase in the number of HIV screenings; the decentralization and broadening of coverage of antiretroviral therapy throughout our country; and the free provision of free testing and antiretroviral medications for those who need it. It is also important to underscore that we have strengthened inter-agency coordination with regard to preventing and treating tuberculosis/HIV co-infection.

In the area of prevention, the Government of El Salvador has focused on outreach to the population. We have underscored sexual and reproductive education based on recognition of the fact that sexual and reproductive health is a human right. As members will surely recall, this issue had been stigmatized in the past. In addition, we have made efforts to develop a national response to HIV in which there is broad

multisectoral participation and civil society and people living with HIV play a prominent and active role.

On the international front, in our capacity as Chair of the Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), together with the Latin America and the Caribbean Ministers of Health, we have agreed on the goal of combining regional efforts to respond to the HIV epidemic. In so doing, we have reaffirmed our commitment to responding to the epidemic and achieving the common goals that bring us together here, specifically those set for 2015. In that regard, we have committed ourselves to achieve the strategic goals set forth by UNAIDS, namely, zero new HIV infections, zero AIDS-related deaths and zero discrimination.

It is important to underscore that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has acknowledged the effectiveness and transparency of the projects implemented in our country, which have contributed to the implementation of many of the efforts necessary to achieve universal access and the Millennium Development Goals. However, that progress could be undermined or set back by a lack of sustained support from the international community. For its part, El Salvador continues to undertake efforts to share good practices in a multisectoral response to HIV, thereby strengthening South-South cooperation.

I would not be representing El Salvador properly if I did not avail myself of the opportunity in this forum to make a very special call to the international community and the conscience of all the countries of the world. I am referring to the crucial need to base our efforts against HIV/AIDS on a human rights-based approach.

Against that backdrop, I would like to underscore the need to be completely inclusive in responding to the needs of persons with disabilities in particular. We have made significant efforts but we still have difficulties in determining the actual rate of incidence of HIV/AIDS among persons with disabilities. It is important that, as the international community, we commit ourselves to continue to do our best to ensure that the response to HIV/AIDS also includes a focus on disabilities, in particular physical, sensory, mental and psychological disabilities.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Erik Solheim, Minister for the Environment and International Development of Norway.

Mr. Solheim (Norway): HIV and AIDS are among the deadliest catastrophes that have ever hit humankind. More people have died from HIV and AIDS than died in the First World War, and 10 times as many as those who died in the Viet Nam War. Most certainly, the pandemic has been 100 times more deadly than most of the wars we see in the world today. This is an absolute catastrophe, and the suffering has been immense.

So, too, is the strength that has been shown. I still recall the young lady I met in Malawi, close to Lilongwe. She took care of five children on her own and strove hard to survive, but still, when her sister died, she took it upon herself to raise her three children. She did so in silence and with dignity, but with precisely the kind of strength that should inspire politicians and civil servants around the world.

We are on the verge of success in our fight against HIV and AIDS. We have reduced the number of new infections and the number of people affected by the disease, and the cost of medicines is coming down. More people are receiving assistance. But we are far from victory and the absolute success we need. It would be completely inexcusable if we started to relent in our efforts. We are zooming in on success, and that is exactly why we should strengthen our resolve rather than do the opposite.

What does it mean to get to zero? There is no better goal or slogan for us to promote than to bring the number of people dying from this disease down to zero. When medicines are cheap, people can live their entire lives with the disease. There is simply no excuse to continue to have so many people die. So the aim is clear: zero victims from HIV and AIDS.

How do we reach that goal? First of all, we must mobilize the resources. I am proud to say that Norway is one of the nations that devote one per cent of GDP to development purposes. We are also increasing the funds we devote to fighting HIV and AIDS through the Global Fund and other institutions. We cannot reduce resources when we want full victory.

Getting to zero also means affordable medicines for those affected. I want to pay tribute to all those who have contributed to that goal — the International Drug Purchase Facility (UNITAID), the Clinton Foundation

and many others, who have made certain that affordable medicines are now available. Since they are now available, it is a shame that they are not reaching all who need them.

Reaching the zero goal means integrating the fight against HIV and AIDS into the normal health-care operations in all nations.

Reaching the zero goal also means making certain that those affected by HIV and AIDS can have decent lives. Here I wish to pay tribute to those nations — the United States, China, Namibia, Ukraine and others — which, since we last met, have opened access for victims of HIV to visit their countries by removing any hindrance or restrictions of movement.

Now we come to the most controversial point: getting to zero requires fighting all the stigmas. Individuals may hold any opinion they like, but States cannot, in the twenty-first century, continue to underpin stigmas. That is simply inexcusable. We must remove all stigmas, whether against transsexual persons, homosexuals, drug users or sex workers. Stigmas are unacceptable, not only because they are unjust, but also because they hinder us in our fight against HIV and AIDS. They reduce our efficiency in the struggle. Stigmas must therefore be fought and removed.

To reach the goal of zero new infections, we must also empower women. The fight against HIV and AIDS is an integral part of the women's emancipation movement. Most new victims of HIV and AIDS are young women. That must stop. We must also, of course, fight gender-based violence, which is sometimes the reason behind the disease. We must therefore see the perspective of women on this matter.

To zoom in on the zero targets, we must empower young people. Our Crown Princess has been at the forefront of inspiring young people in Norway and globally to see their part in the struggle. Young people are most affected by the disease, so they must take up the challenge of informing their contemporaries about sexual and reproductive health, taking up the political struggle against stigmas in their nations, and making sure that ministers provide sufficient resources for health care. That is the new challenge for our young people, who are inspired by, among many others, our Crown Princess.

Finally, I regret to say that some faith-based organizations did not play a very helpful role in the lead-up to this conference. In light of that fact, I pay a special tribute to those many faith-based organizations — be they from Christianity, Islam or any other major world religion — which have taken up the issues of removing stigmas and providing sexual and reproductive health to all citizens of the globe. We need faith-based organizations in particular in this struggle.

We are very close to success in this area. Humanity eradicated smallpox from the face of the earth. We are on track to achieving great success on measles. The next huge target is to achieve the same success with HIV and AIDS as we did with smallpox, and success is within our reach. We simply need to follow the Nike slogan: just do it!

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Adama Traoré, Minister for Health of Burkina Faso.

Mr. Traoré (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and President of the National Council for the Fight against AIDS. At the outset, I would like to convey to you, Sir, his warm greetings and heartfelt thanks for having organized this important meeting.

Burkina Faso is honoured to be taking part in this High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS, which provides an important opportunity to evaluate with the international community the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) of 2001 and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262) of 2006. As in 2008, like other countries, Burkina Faso produced a report in 2010, pursuant to the special session of the on HIV/AIDS, that shows the progress made towards achieving universal access and Millennium Development Goal 6.

At the institutional level, the National Council for the Fight Against AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, presided over by His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso, has met regularly since 2001. Burkina Faso shares its experience in governance, coordination and leadership with the countries of the subregion. It ensures the cooperation of the Executive Secretariat with the national committees and councils for the fight against

AIDS of the West African Economic and Monetary Union and with Mauritania.

Since 28 July 2010, Burkina Faso has had a new strategic framework for the fight against HIV, AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases for the period 2011-2015 in order to consolidate achievements, while continuing to reduce HIV prevalence. Results-oriented management and gender considerations are some ongoing guiding principles of our national response. Regarding governance, Burkina Faso also has a law on the fight against HIV and AIDS and the protection of the rights of persons living with HIV and AIDS, which is implemented at every level.

On the operational front, the increase in the number of health care centres, together with free treatment, has made it possible to increase the number of people receiving antiretroviral treatment by more than 5,000 a year. We went from 26,448 persons receiving antiretroviral treatment in 2009 to 31,543 by late 2010. There has also been significant progress in preventing HIV mother-to-child transmission. Since late 2010, all the country's health care districts have been implementing the programme to prevent HIV mother-to-child transmission in 1,492 of 1,614 treatment centres, representing a coverage rate of 92 per cent.

Despite those achievements, which encourage us to resolutely pursue the achievement of the Millennium Development Goal 6, there remain significant challenges to overcome. We must keep prevention as the cornerstone of the fight against the epidemic; eliminate HIV mother-to-child transmission; and eradicate all forms of stigmatization of and discrimination against people living with HIV. We must develop specific programmes to combat AIDS that target young people aged 15 to 25 and specific high-risk groups; reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS; strengthen the fight against tuberculosis, which remains the primary cause of death of HIV-infected persons in Africa; and mobilize national resources to fund the fight against HIV and AIDS, which remains dependent on decreasing foreign financing. Lastly, there is an absence of subregional and regional programmes to strengthen national efforts.

I pay ringing tribute to the commitment of persons living with HIV, civil society, the private sector, the world of research, and all those who day and night generously devote themselves to the support of persons infected and affected by HIV. I take this opportunity to reiterate my appreciation to all our development partners, who have always worked with us in our resolute fight against this scourge. I remain convinced that it is through the pursuit of urgent, dynamic and mutually agreed solutions that we will achieve the Millennium Development Goals on HIV and AIDS.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ponmek Dalaloy, Minister of Health of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Mr. Dalaloy (Lao People's Democratic Republic): At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to commend the United Nations for convening this High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS, which is of great significance to the global fight against HIV and AIDS.

Throughout 30 years of common endeavour to combat HIV and AIDS, significant and visible achievements have been recorded. Today, we have seen more integration in preventing and controlling communicable and non-communicable diseases, while the identity and specificity of the individual approach remain.

In 2006, our country, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, reiterated its determination before the General Assembly to establish a strong national HIV response that aims at universal access to a comprehensive prevention, treatment, care and support programme. Since then, every two years my country has reported to the General Assembly on the progress made in scaling up the response.

Some key milestones have been the establishment of a multisectoral coordination body, the National Committee for the Control of AIDS, and the drawing up of a new national strategic and action plan on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections for the years 2011 to 2015. To monitor possible emerging epidemics, our HIV surveillance system has been progressively strengthened. Our prevention programme has become more comprehensive through the launch of a 100-per cent condom initiative. Our national treatment programme now has five operational centres across the country.

The endorsement by the National Assembly of a law on HIV and the integration of our programme into regional initiatives on HIV and AIDS within the greater Mekong subregion on aspects related to HIV,

infrastructure, migration, drugs and human trafficking are yet more positive achievements.

We are thankful to the Global Fund for the financial support that has helped us to enhance capacity-building in five successful grant operations, thus maintaining our country as a low-affected country. We are also grateful for the financial and the technical assistance provided by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), bilateral development partners and international non-governmental organizations.

Although the Lao People's Democratic Republic has made considerable progress in responding to HIV, constraints and challenges remain. The virus continues to pose social and economic threats to the Lao People's Democratic Republic — at the heart of the greater Mekong subregion, with rapid national development, and surrounded by five fast-growing neighbours — as it spreads to specific segments of the population where transmission is especially prevalent. Our estimation and projection indicate an incidence of some 1,000 new infections every year.

While progress has been made in reducing prevalence among sex workers, there are hotspots of continued high prevalence in some locations. New data indicate that the epidemic of men having sex with men is on the rise, and in our main cities an emerging epidemic has been found among people who inject drugs. This suggests that efforts to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS must be further strengthened in terms of both coverage and quality of services, as well as in sustainability.

We see 2011 as a critical moment for our national HIV response and, inspired by the new UNAIDS vision "Getting to zero", we are committed to implementing new strategies designed to minimize the impact of HIV and AIDS on social and economic development in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. We support the declaration that will be adopted at this High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Vieira Dias Van-Dúnem, Minister of Health of the Republic of Angola.

Mr. Van-Dúnem (Angola): At the outset, allow me to convey to the Assembly the salutations of my President, His Excellency Mr. José Eduardo dos Santos, who cannot be present due to State reasons; thus I am tasked with representing him.

Thirty years after the start of the epidemic and 10 years after the landmark special session on HIV and AIDS, we are gathered here to review the progress made and to reaffirm our commitment to sustaining our response as nations, as individuals and as the international community.

Angola is a country in sub-Saharan Africa — the region most affected by the epidemic — with a population of mostly young people estimated to be 55 per cent women. We are going through an intense phase of economic and social reconstruction largely affected by the long-lasting consequences that characterize countries that have experienced decades of war.

Despite this dynamic, many challenges still prevail as we are a country with a large territory where, despite the reconstruction efforts undertaken by the Government, health infrastructure is still lacking and access to basic social services has not yet reached desired levels. The HIV epidemic in Angola varies in profile and behaviour according to the region or province. HIV prevalence ranges from 0.8 to 7 per cent, with a median of 2 per cent, thus making Angola a low-prevalence country.

Despite all the obstacles, the Government has been gradually expanding free access to prevention, treatment, care and support services. From 2003 to 2010, the number of counselling and testing centres increased from eight to 558; we now have 133 antiretroviral treatment centres for adults, 120 for children and 29 centres for prevention of mother-to-child transmission. In 2010, over 450,000 people in our country were tested for HIV. More than 60,000 HIV-positive adults and children were enrolled in care and support programmes and about half of them continue to receive free antiretroviral therapy. Each year, the number of pregnant women who have been tested increases. In 2010, we tested more than 260,000 women through prenatal services.

While Angola achieved a rapid expansion of HIV-specific services, we quickly realized that this was not the best way to create sustainable services. As a result, the Government is committed to integrating HIV services within existing health services while enhancing systemic responses and integrating HIV care as a part of primary care.

The data indicate that HIV prevalence is stable in Angola. We know, however, that there are determinants that can quickly change this reality. But if we continue to invest in knowledge, access to health services and education, gender equality and youth leadership, and involve people living with HIV in updating and implementing strategies while prioritizing the most vulnerable groups on the basis of shared responsibility, we are certain that we will maintain this trend and ensure that no man, woman or child will become newly infected with HIV. We are committed to making that a reality.

We want to ensure that every girl and boy has correct knowledge about HIV and AIDS, as well as skills to protect themselves from infection. We also want to ensure that all pregnant women in Angola have access to prevention of mother-to-child transmission services as a part of prenatal care and that every man, woman and child in need of treatment can access it as close to where they live as possible. We want to provide support through home care or other means, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations, in order to monitor patients and all children and families made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS and to ensure that they have access to all social services, including psychological and nutritional support. This is our vision.

Mr. Ould Hadrami (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We are committed to the ongoing global efforts to reduce the burden of the epidemic. With our partners — to whom we would like to convey our appreciation for their support to us — and with the continuing engagement of the international community, we will strive to achieve universal access and zero new infections. We are committed to achieving a better future.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nassirou Bako Arifari, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin.

Mr. Bako Arifari (Benin) (*spoke in French*): It is with pleasure that I convey the greetings of the people, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr. Boni Yayi, and of the Government of Benin.

This important High-level Meeting has provided the Assembly with an opportunity to take stock of the progress made and results obtained in the fight against the HIV/AIDS epidemic following the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS (resolution S-26/2) and five years after the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS (resolution 60/262) on universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for people infected with HIV/AIDS and affected by the pandemic.

Benin is confronting a widespread though low-prevalence epidemic. The number of people — adults and children — infected with HIV was estimated at 60,914 in 2010. Prevalence is estimated at 2 per cent, with a significant difference between urban and rural environments. A diagnosis has also shown that women are the most vulnerable segment of society, reflecting the feminization of the disease in my country, in which twice as many women as men are infected with HIV/AIDS. The risk of an explosion of the epidemic persists, as HIV prevalence is estimated at 26.5 per cent among sex workers.

The President returned to the Chair.

Aware of the devastating impact of the epidemic on our country's development aspirations, successive Administrations in Benin have integrated the fight against AIDS into policies, strategies and development programmes since the first case of HIV/AIDS was identified in 1985.

At the political level, that commitment led to the creation of a national multisectoral committee to fight AIDS, headed by the President of the Republic. Similarly, by presidential decree, a national body was created to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders.

In terms of programmes, Benin has formulated and implemented two national strategic frameworks and a plan to accelerate the fight against AIDS. To finance that fight, a budget line was created in all ministries to support the implementation of sectoral policies and initiatives. Substantial resources were also mobilized in cooperation with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the World Bank and United Nations system agencies, among other technical and financial partners.

Uniting those efforts helped to increase access to prevention and treatment services and to stabilize the prevalence of the epidemic at around 2 per cent since 2002. Thus, the antiretroviral coverage rate for people infected with HIV has grown from 40 per cent to 84 per cent. The coverage rates for the prevention of

mother-to-child HIV transmission increased from 27 per cent to 37 per cent between 2007 and 2010.

Benin is currently implementing a national strategy to eliminate mother-to-child HIV transmission and is developing a national gender policy whose operational components are focused on addressing the risk factors and specific vulnerabilities of women and girls.

In 2006, the National Assembly of Benin adopted a law on HIV to fight all forms of discrimination and stigmatization to which those infected and affected can be subjected, thereby improving the legal framework of the country's response to HIV/AIDS. Judicial personnel throughout the country have received training on the links between the law, HIV/AIDS and human rights.

Civil society, religious and private-sector organizations, including those comprised of people living with HIV, are playing an active role in the response to and management of HIV through various networks.

I should like to take this valuable opportunity to thank and congratulate the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and its Executive Director for their sterling advocacy work, for coordinating the global movement against AIDS and for mobilizing resources, in particular for the benefit of my country. I wish to also thank all the technical and financial partners and national and international civil society organizations that are supporting my country in its efforts to fight the AIDS pandemic.

The progress made and the results achieved in the fight against AIDS in Benin are nonetheless fragile, owing to the shrinking availability of resources in the context of the world economic crisis. That could jeopardize the continuity of achievements and initiatives in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Thus, it is more necessary and urgent than ever to take new measures to accelerate the response to the pandemic and other opportunistic infections.

We must face with courage the challenges linked to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the 2015 deadline, in particular Goal 6, which requires the sharing of responsibilities and increased international solidarity. I invite Member States to make those commitments so that we can take up the collective challenges of ensuring universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support for individuals infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. On that hopeful note, I urge the international community to continue supporting my country so that the results expected by 2015 will be effectively achieved.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yin Li, Vice-Minister for Health of China.

Mr. Yin Li (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): It is my pleasure to attend the United Nations High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS on behalf of the Chinese Government. I wish to pay tribute to the United Nations for its efforts in global AIDS prevention and control.

Attaining the development goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) and arresting and reversing the spread of the AIDS epidemic is an important item on the global agenda. As a responsible developing country, China has actively fulfilled its commitments in achieving universal access to AIDS prevention and treatment, eliminating social discrimination and ensuring rights to prevention, treatment and care of people living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

We have established an AIDS prevention and treatment mechanism, led by the Government and involving various sectors across the entire society. We have introduced a series of laws, regulations and policy measures and have integrated prevention and control goals into national health development plans and reform programmes. Thanks to our efforts over the years, the spread of AIDS epidemic has slowed down, the mortality rate has decreased significantly, and the quality of life of people with HIV/AIDS has been greatly improved.

The AIDS epidemic does not respect national borders. The three zeros defined by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS — zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths — is an ambitious blueprint. Years of practice have shown that in order to achieve that goal, all countries, all organizations and all people must be mobilized. Responsibilities must be clearly defined, joint prevention and treatment mechanisms established, and consensus reached in two areas.

First, in facing the common challenge of HIV/AIDS, developed and developing countries must

assume shared responsibilities and rise above the divides of gender, skin colour, nationality, beliefs, values and ideology in order to take joint action and create synergies. Developed countries should further provide developing countries with generous and unconditional financial and technical support. Developing countries should give the same priority to AIDS control as to economic development, and explore models of prevention and treatment consistent with their national conditions.

Secondly, given the increasing pressure and burden on society posed by AIDS, the private sector and relevant organizations should assume more social responsibility. On the one hand, efforts should be made to mobilize more resources for better prevention, treatment and care measures. Multinational drug manufacturers should reduce the price of drugs, testing equipment and reagents through technology transfer, contract manufacturing, and the reduction of monopoly profits in order to promote universal access to treatment services.

AIDS prevention and treatment are an important component in China's global fight against AIDS. Thus, progress made in China is positive contribution to the world. The Chinese Government will, as always, strengthen the working mechanism of Government leadership, multisector coordination and the participation of society as a whole, and scale up its implementation of relevant measures to achieve the five universal accesses and two equal accesses, namely, universal access to public education, testing and counselling, the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, comprehensive intervention and antiretroviral therapy; and equal access to medical care and employment for people living with HIV/AIDS, and to Government subsidies for children orphaned by AIDS through the removal of social discrimination. In the meantime, we will continue to strengthen communication and cooperation with the international community to address new challenges.

The Chinese Government will continue to be committed to fight against AIDS and shoulder our responsibilities and obligations and make contribution to reaching the goal of global AIDS control.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martin Dahinden, Secretary of State of Switzerland.

Mr. Dahinden (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Combating HIV/AIDS will remain a priority for Switzerland at both the national and international levels. My country is delighted that it has been possible to find a consensus on a new joint declaration on HIV/AIDS and thanks the Secretary-General for his excellent report. We appreciate the data gathered and support the recommendations made. While some of the results are encouraging, it must be noted that, although the epidemic has been stabilized worldwide, the rate of infection in some countries continues to climb. There are major challenges ahead, notably in areas closely linked to prevention and the protection of human rights.

Efforts to combat discrimination and the stigmatization are crucial. This is valid in Switzerland, where we are taking concrete measures to better fight such behaviours, as well as at the international level, where key segments of the population — such as men who have sex with men, sex workers, persons who inject drugs, transsexuals and adolescents — often have no access to information, prevention, treatment, care or support related to HIV.

In this context, I would like to underline Switzerland's positive experience with respect to those who inject drugs, notably in an effort to reduce the risks involved. The decrease in infections in this group shows how important it is to include those directly concerned by HIV/AIDS in the search for solutions.

Switzerland is committed in its programmes, in various forums and at various other levels to making the promotion and protection of human rights, including those linked to sexual and reproductive health, and to equality of the sexes a centrepiece of all efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. Those directly concerned must have the power to decide for themselves on the future of their sexual and reproductive health. For example, economic, social, cultural and legal factors that deny women and girls their fundamental rights must be eliminated.

In this context, we underline the crucial role of men and boys with respect to sexual and reproductive health and efforts to combat HIV. Violence against women and girls and homophobia must be outlawed by legislation that is rigorously applied. Also worth noting is the importance of respecting and protecting the rights of millions of children and adolescents affected and infected by HIV. Young people often have no

access to sex education or to sexual and reproductive health services suited to their specific needs.

Switzerland has increased and will continue to increase its efforts in the areas of prevention. Access to medicines remains a major challenge at the international scale. It is crucial to create strategic partnerships among different sectors and actors in an effort to ensure non-discriminatory access for all to basic health services and to medicines. Despite the many potential conflicts of interest, the private sector is becoming increasingly aware of its responsibilities.

Since it was first discovered, HIV has claimed more than 25 million victims. The international response has been equally impressive, but these efforts must continue. It is in that context that we commend the catalyzing role of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

In conclusion, Switzerland intends to continue to give its full support to the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment of 2001 (resolution S-26/2), the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS of 2006 (resolution 62/262), and to the new declaration to be adopted at the end of this High-level Meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jorge Díaz, Minister for Health of Chile.

Mr. Díaz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Chile — composed of representatives of the Government and accompanied by persons living with HIV and by representatives of social and non-governmental organizations — I welcome this effort of the States Members of the Organization to refocus the global discussion on the important topic of the fight against HIV/AIDS as a commitment of humankind.

Since the Secretary-General appealed from this very rostrum for Member States to make the commitments that we are reviewing today, our country has become fully involved, responding to the appeal and working to face these challenges. We have great achievements to report, including legally guaranteed coverage of antiretroviral treatment for all who need it. Controls have increased the survival rates of persons affected. We now guarantee access to HIV testing for all pregnant women and a protocol for the prevention of vertical transmission, resulting in a sharp decline in the number of children born with HIV.

With regard to prevention, we have seen important progress made through an annual prevention campaign that has a stable budget established by law. There are thus new generations of adolescents and young people in Chile who are better informed about HIV/AIDS, which is an essential to the implementation of measures of prevention and personal care in sexual health. We also have anti-discrimination legislation that prohibits making job recruitment and retention and access to education dependent on a person's serostatus, and ensures that HIV testing is free, voluntary and confidential.

Our country is currently engaged in removing all barriers hindering access to diagnosis, since control of the epidemic requires that the most affected populations know their diagnoses, have early access to monitoring and treatment, and enjoy the desired impact of antiretroviral therapy not only on individual health and quality of life, but also on collective health. Secondary prevention is thus a central strategy of our comprehensive HIV/AIDS care policy, which is one of the most important axes of Chile's health goals for the decade 2011-2020 and demonstrates our commitment to the issue.

Since the initial appeal, we undoubtedly have seen very important progress in the world, particularly in the area of care and access to antiretroviral treatment. We also see that major challenges and gaps remain, fundamentally as regards access to preventive services. The epidemic continues to spread, showing that the efforts made have not sufficed to contain it.

In this important area of public health, many of the inequities and inequalities existing in the world today are reflected in people's vulnerabilities, significantly affecting the poorest, the young, women, men who have sex with men, refugees, migrants and persons deprived of liberty, among others. There is thus a need to strengthen the focus on social factors in addressing HIV/AIDS prevention, socio-structural causes and inequities in order to find long-lasting solutions.

Individual, social, cultural and regional realities must be taken into account in seeking a more effective response to the epidemic, recognizing diversity as a cultural asset. This approach necessitates information reflecting the different realities and ongoing evaluation of activities.

We need strategic alliances in order to advance towards solutions to the problems affecting our societies. We must then formulate health policies adapted to the epidemiological, social and cultural necessities of our different countries. There must be a much stronger involvement of stakeholders in order to attain the goals, greater mainstreaming of the topic in society, and more shared responsibility with the participation of social stakeholders, the various elements of the public sector, the private sector and grassroots organizations.

For our Government, full respect for the human rights of persons living with HIV/AIDS and of the most vulnerable populations is not only a duty of the State, but also a requirement for progress in controlling the epidemic. Legal and political conditions must be created to protect and promote the human rights of the population, particularly those most vulnerable to HIV infection.

My country reiterates today its willingness to contribute constructively in all forums to a positive relationship with respect to globalization issues, especially in terms of support for the renewed discussion on global public goods. Chile welcomes the creation of collective forums and initiatives of solidarity to combine efforts and resources as a substantive advance in efforts to narrow the huge economic gap in HIV response between the industrialized world and countries with fewer resources.

We therefore reiterate our participation in the International Drug Purchase Facility initiative, of which we are one of the founding partners, which represents our commitment to move forward in our efforts to develop new forms of international cooperation in attending to needs, especially of the least protected. Accordingly, my country is participating in a series of collaborative initiatives to improve prevention strategies, access to medicines and programmes to combat stigma and discrimination, to the benefit of the least protected populations.

We also highlight the initiative to ensure universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, and support the World Health Organization HIV/AIDS strategy for 2011-2015 and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS 2011-2015 strategy. Both reflect the sensitivity and vital need for more decisive intervention and action in dealing with this problem.

Lastly, I would also like to state that Chile reaffirms its commitment to continuing to work to halt the AIDS epidemic in our country and to cooperating at the international and regional levels and thereby contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and of the targets agreed upon in this important Assembly.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.